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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk June 11, 2017

East edition No 768

DEFEATED

MP stalwart loses seat after 30 years

Cathedral city goes red as Brazier is given the boot

WIPEOUT

Ukip falls away as Lib Dems also fail to fire

Labour take first or second in every Kent seat with sharp vote rises

ELECTION

May the farce be with you

Election shambles for Tories as even Canterbury falls to Labour revival

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Democracy was biggest winner of the election

FOR many years, in recent times, politics has been perceived as boring; an often complicated or baffling process of governance which fails to have much connection with the common man or woman.

Yet the events of Thursday night and Friday morning once again reminded us that not only is politics arguably the most thrilling spectacle but that we have the power in our vote that so many dismiss with a shrug and 'what's the point?'.

Not since 1997 has there been such a dramatic outcome to an election that so many - myself included - wrote off as a one-horse race. But it demonstrated that if people become engaged with the process that with the single vote we have the most powerful people in the land can be served notice.

The Tory defeat in Canterbury was certainly the result of a concerted effort by supporters of Jeremy Corbyn to get people registered and to the polling booths, but it demonstrates that if effort is made, the most remarkable, and frankly unbelievable, results can be delivered.

For the Conservatives it will be a wake-up call to warn about complacency. For Labour a vital shot in the arm of a mood which was becoming increasingly morbid about ever making headway in Kent again.

Made all the more remarkable by Labour's miserable showing in the county elections just a few weeks ago, now the party knows, now the public knows, it can pack a real punch.

And that's good for our democracy. Because regardless of political persuasion, this county needs a blend of views and parties to represent the diverse range of people who live and work here.

The blue rinse we've had so often in recent years has been washed away.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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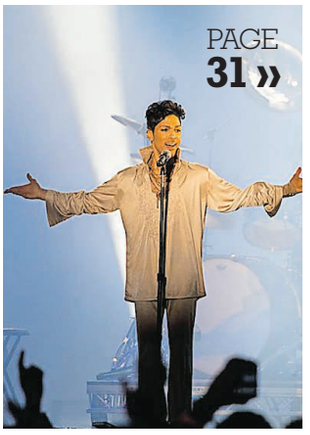

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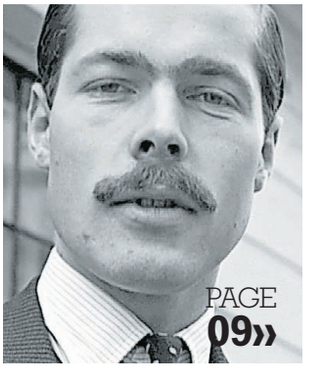

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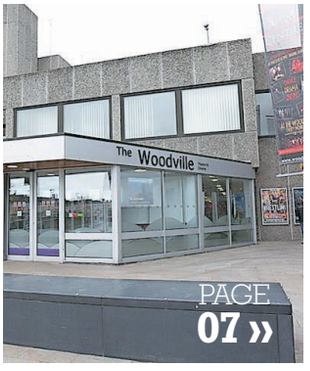

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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Room G46, The Panorama, 130 Park Street, Ashford, Kent TN24 8EZ
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

'We've made history' as Brazier is given the boot

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

DEFEATED: Sir Julian Brazier will bid farewell to the Commons after 30 years

CONSERVATIVE stalwart Sir Julian Brazier's 30-year spell as Canterbury MP dramatically came to an end this week as he was beaten by Rosie Duffield in the county's most shocking general election result in years.

Labour stole the seat, which also encompasses coastal town Whitstable, for the first time in its history - ending almost a century of Tory dominance in the area - by 187 votes in one of the tightest battles across the country.

A recount was required in the early hours of Friday morning, before Ms Duffield was declared victorious, and told supporters who had gathered in the city: "We've made history".

The student city had seen a major push by supporters of Jeremy Corbyn to activate young voters and ensure they made their voices heard in an election Theresa May hoped would strengthen her hand in the Brexit negotiations.

It was a sensational swing in votes after Sir Julian won the last general election in 2015 by almost 10,000 votes, meaning a 20 per cent increase in Labour's vote was required to win its first Kent seat since it was wiped out in 2010.

Speaking following her victory, Ms Duffield said: "Forgive me, I'm hugely shocked.

"Thank you so so much Canterbury district, we've made history.

"Some 160 years of the Conservative Party in this constituency and we've just broken that record.

"Thank you to absolute everybody on my team, thank you to all of you who put your trust and faith in me from all the parties and I promise to represent you as best as I possibly can as your new MP.

"I will fight to save the NHS, I will fight a hard Brexit, I will fight for the environment and all of the things you voted me in to do.

"Thank you so, so much."

In what was a remarkable election, Labour saw its vote soar across the county, finishing second in all other seats as Kent otherwise remained true blue.

For a full breakdown of results and reaction from other key seats contested in the county this week - including South Thanet where Craig Mackinlay was defending his seat just days after being charged over allegations of election fraud in the 2010 poll - see our special six-page section on pages 14-21.

Air ambulance plans to move HQ to airport set to get the green light

PLANS to move Kent air ambulance's operational base from its long-time home in Marden to land at Rochester Airport is expected to be rubber-stamped by councillors next week.

A planning application was submitted to Medway Council earlier this year after bosses at the charity, which also operates in Surrey and Sussex, decided the current site was no longer viable.

If approved, it would mean relocating some 30 staff to a new office block on the site which would accommodate 14 additional staff members plus six visiting pilots and crew.

A 24/7 service is offered by the charity but Marden is not configured for night flying and therefore night-time operations are conducted from Redhill instead.

Additionally, its current two helicopters are in the process of being replaced for larger rotorcraft which would not fit at the existing base.

Therefore, a decision has been taken for both helicopters to be based at Redhill operating out of a suitable (with adaptation) hanger that has become available there.

However, bosses are keen to maintain their Kent roots and remain in the county, which they say is "the established heart of the organisation".

As there is no planning restriction on the number of emergency helicopter movements that are allowed at the airport, the operational activities of the trust there are not a matter for planning consideration.

The charity relies almost entirely on public donations for the approximately £8m per year it spends on providing the service.

Locals appear to be overwhelmingly in favour of the proposals, after the council received some 236 comments of support, compared to just 11 objections.

Potential issues raised centred around noise pollution. A Medway planning committee meets on Tuesday evening June 13.

Drones take off as police add them to their arsenal

DRONES are being used by Kent Police to help find missing people and better assess crime scenes and road crashes.

Officers have been trialling the unmanned aerial vehicles since 2015 and have consulted with other forces using drones to identify the benefits offered to day-to-day policing.

Chiefs say the units will help located missing people before they come to harm as well as at some crime scenes and traffic incidents to provide officers with a better understanding of the terrain and evidential opportunities.

Drones will be operated by uniformed, specially trained officers and use of the force's drones will be published on the police's website.

City march draws crowd in call to protect hospital site

CAMPAIGNERS turned out in force in Canterbury last weekend to march in protest against cuts to hospital services in east Kent.

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust has been criticised in recent weeks after announcing stroke patients will temporarily not be taken to Kent & Canterbury but instead to other hospitals in Ashford and Margate.

It followed the trust's decision to move more than half of the junior doctors at the Canterbury site to the William Harvey and QEQM.

Campaigner Ken Rogers said: "With the possibility looming of services in east Kent being cut to the bone this was a chance to show the strength of feeling against those cuts."

The trust defended its decision insisting few patients would be hit.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

MEP: We need you Trump in our hour of need

A KENT MEP has reached out to Donald Trump in an open letter, urging him to travel to the UK imminently because the country "needs" him following three terror attacks in as many months.

Janice Atkinson, who lives in Chislehurst and stood for Ukip in Folkestone and Hythe before becoming an independent MEP for the south east, posted a plea of almost 800 words to the president on her Facebook page amid suggests his state visit could be shelved.

She said: "Please come, our country needs you. Faced with the biggest threat since the Second World War, it needs Britain, the US and Russia to stand together. Three great powers; as we did with Churchill, Stalin and Eisenhower. It's this century's hour of need."

TV experts set to help Chillenden killer Stone in his latest appeal bid

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A TWO-part TV documentary which saw experts re-examine the case files of the horrific Chillenden murder of Lin and Megan Russell 21 years ago, has seen two of them so convinced of the fragility of the conviction of Michael Stone, they intend to assist in his next appeal.

The BBC2 show The Chillenden Murders concluded on Tuesday night.

It aimed to uncover the truth about one of Kent's most notorious cases which took place in July 1996.

Mother Lin Russell, 45, and her six-year-old daughter Megan were beaten to death on a quiet country path with a hammer as they walked home from a swimming gala in Chillenden, between Canterbury and Dover. Another daughter Josie suffered horrific injuries but somehow survived.

Michael Stone, from Gillingham, is 20 years into a minimum 25-year prison sentence for the crime.

DOUBT: Michael Stone

But the programme reignited the debate about the lack of any forensic evidence linking Stone to the scene and the apparent cell confession upon which he was convicted.

Damien Daley claimed Stone admitted to the crime while he was on remand in Canterbury. Daley is now serving time for murder, while a former friend on the BBC programme claims Daley admitted to lying about Stone at both Stone's original and retrial.

A shoelace which apparently contained some DNA evidence thought to be from the attacker, also has since gone missing.

Now barrister Stephen Kamlish QC who appeared in the show is taking up the case along with fellow barrister Sheryl Nwosu.

Detective chief superintendent Jane Antrobus who was part of the team concluded: "There is no ID against Stone, there is no forensics against Stone.

"I am not saying he is not a dangerous man, and I am not saying the best place for him isn't locked up, but I am saying to me, I don't think there is enough evidence beyond reasonable doubt to convict him."

Kent Police has consistently insisted it is not looking for anyone else for the crime.

MYSTERY: The structure in Dover

PM sign sends two-fingered salute to EU

A HUGE structure of the prime minister appearing to make a rude gesture towards the rest of Europe appeared on the White Cliffs of Dover on Monday.

The effigy of Theresa May, dressed in a Union Jack dress while flicking the 'V' sign with her fingers, towered over the port town before it was swiftly removed.

Understood to be well over 50ft tall, the structure looks out over the Channel, and has received a mixed response among locals in St Margaret's.

Charity worker, Simon Hare, 51, told KoS it was a "stupid" stunt ahead of months of Brexit negotiations between the British government and the European Union. It went up just days before the country headed to the polls.

No-one has yet claimed responsibility for erecting the structure.

Added Mr Hare "Kent is quite an anti-EU county, but it's a stupid thing to have on the cliffs which everyone can see when you're coming over on the ferry.

"Whether you are pro or anti Brexit this sends a really negative message to Europe on many levels and risks makes our negotiating position even harder than it already was.

"Everyone I know would really like to know who is responsible for it as it gives such a bad impression of our area."

Summer drink and drug drive crackdown

A CRACKDOWN on drink-driving has been launched by Kent Police, with hopes of reducing the number of casualties and deaths on our roads.

Officers will take an 'intelligence led' approach to target those who recklessly drink and drug drive, with a number of road checks taking place at all times of the day across the county.

Officers will also focus on high risk locations up until the end of the campaign.

Chief inspector Peter Steenhuis said: "Drivers should never get behind the wheel if they have had alcohol or are under the influence of controlled drugs as they significantly increase the chances of harming themselves and others.

"As police officers we have to go to collisions where people have been killed or seriously injured, and all too often it becomes apparent that alcohol or drugs is a major factor in the incident.

"Our message is simple, if you are going to have an alcoholic drink on a night out then plan another way of getting home."

Dreamland shut all weekend for Gorillaz

DREAMLAND in Margate will be closed all weekend to the public as it stages a major live music event on Saturday.

The theme park, which re-opened at the end of May, will be hosting Gorillaz, fronted by Blur singer Damon Albarn, as headliners of a one day festival called Demon Dayz.

All 15,000 tickets sold out in a matter of minutes when they went on sale.

Traffic around the town will also be subject to considerable changes with a number of roads closed to allow the crowds to gather and disperse safely, as well as for security concerns.

The eagerly anticipated show is the band's first major show in the UK for seven years. It will also be the first major outdoor show utilising Dreamland's new outdoor arena - part of its £25 million revamp which took place before it opened its doors again for the summer season.

Dreamland will next be open next Saturday, June 17, from 11am.

Boy lands role in big Hollywood movie

AN eight-year-old schoolboy from Meopham has won a plum role in a major new Hollywood blockbuster directed by Ridley Scott and currently being filmed in Italy.

Kit Cranston plays the grandson of Jean Paul Getty - played by Kevin Spacey - in the movie All The Money In The World.

It also stars Mark Wahlberg and Michelle Williams and is based around the harrowing kidnapping of Jean Paul Getty III, the 16-year-old grandson of the oil tycoon - then acknowledged as the richest man in the world.

Kit plays Mark Getty, brother of the kidnapped boy.

Kit said: "I was very very happy when told I had got the job, I was excited to be on camera again and not nervous at all."

The youngster attends Make Believe Sevenoaks, a Saturday dance, acting and singing school. It was through his appearance there he was spotted by the Make Believe Talent Agency which landed him the role in the movie.

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Theatre future 'in doubt' as it braces for £110,000 cut-backs

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

A FORMER leader of Gravesham council has warned major proposed cuts to the Woodville Theatre "could bring the end" to the venue.

The cabinet will meet on Tuesday to discuss £110,000 worth of cuts - which would include redundancies and reducing the programme at the venue - as Gravesham Borough Council looks to balance the books in the face of continued central government cutbacks.

The council insists the proposals would help "retain facilities that are used by a wide variety of groups and organisations, as well as providing a well balanced programme of shows and events".

But Labour group leader John Burden warned: "Making these sort of cuts is a step back. We've seen in the past if you improve the offering then more people come, but doing this instead could potentially bring the end of the Woodville.

"The theatre might not have enough seats for the big acts, but if we look at more interesting shows that bring in the community, then more people will come.

"If Paramount does ever happen, and with the development of Ebbsfleet Garden City, we need to keep that community offering for people in their town centre."

THREAT: Opponents on the council say this could be the beginning of the end

Council leader David Turner suggested staff at the theatre could be replaced by volunteers following a successful trial scheme, adding there was "nothing at the back of the cabinet's mind suggesting we need to close the theatre".

The Woodville Theatre opened in 1968 as part of the Civic Centre.

The council is not alone in having to examine funding of its subsidised theatre - others in Kent, notably in Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury, have been forced to look closely at what to do in order to make the necessary savings.

The Marlowe Theatre recently announced plans to become a charitable trust, thus removing the council subsidy it benefitted from. That move allows the theatre to seek additional grants as a consequence of not being under taxpayer control.

The Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells saw a number of jobs cut earlier this year.

Charges over violin pinched from train

A 33-year-old from Greenwich was charged on Thursday with stealing a high value violin from a Kent train.

British Transport Police last week launched an investigation after the 100-year-old instrument was reported stolen on a service between Barnehurst and Dartford.

The violin was swiftly returned to its owner just hours after a public appeal was made.

Dangerous driver is hit with jail sentence

A DRIVER who ran a red light and smashed into a motorcylist. leaving them fighting for their life after using a bus lane to jump a traffic queue has been jailed. Martin Tucker, 46, of Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, was sentenced to two years and eight months at Maidstone Crown Court and banned from driving.

Armed forces event

THOUSANDS of people will gather at Great Lines Heritage Park in Medway later this month to pay tribute to the work of the armed forces.

Medway Council, in conjunction with the Royal School of Military Engineering, is hosting the Armed Forces Day on June 24 - a free event celebrating the work of serving men and women, and honouring veterans who have served to protect the country.

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Council set to discuss plans for Banksy's EU artwork

COUNCIL chiefs in Dover are being urged to protect a piece by coveted street artist Banksy, which appeared in the port town last month, "as a matter of urgency".

The district council's cabinet meets on Monday to discuss the future of the artwork, which depicts a workman on a ladder chipping away at one of the 12 stars on the European Union flag, on the side of the former Castle Amusements building, which is set to be demolished.

Property owners, the Godden family, which also owned the building upon which he daubed his previous Kent work - Art Buff in Folkestone - said the work is likely to be removed and sold, and that they were looking at options with a London art gallery.

However, Tony Baxter, director at The Sincura Group, which specialises in the sale of highly desirable artwork, told us last month the piece was ultimately "worthless", due to the difficulty in finding a buyer for work of that size.

The piece was discussed by the council's scrutiny committee on May 24, and recommended the cabinet "explores the options available to protect the artwork...as a matter of urgency".

Register now if your child wants to take Kent Test

PARENTS of year six children looking for a place at a county grammar school next year are being encouraged to register for the Kent Test.

Families have until July 3 to register for the tests, which will take place after the summer break on September 7 for children who go to school in Kent, and September 9 for those outside of the county, before results are sent out on October 12.

Roger Gough, Kent County Council cabinet member for education said: "To speed up the process we urge as many parents as possible to register online.

"Some 95 per cent of all test registrations are made this way and allows results to be sent by email.

"The Kent Test helps parents and children find the most suitable type of school for the next stage of their education.

"As more grammar schools include priority for pupils eligible for free school meals in their admissions arrangements we are particularly keen to encourage these families to register and sit the test."

To be registered for testing, children must be resident in the UK and expecting to start their final year in primary school in September 2017.

Parents who register online will be sent their child's assessment by e-mail after 4pm on October 12, while those who register by post will get the assessment decision in a letter sent by first class post on the same day.

On National Offer Day, March 1, 2018, the county council will offer parents a place at one of the county's schools.

Steiner School is saved

CANTERBURY's Steiner School have secured a deal to protect its future.

The independent school, close to Chartham, faced an uncertain future due to declinging pupil numbers.

But it says it is now safe and will start offering bursaries to new pupils.

Crossing shut overnight

DRIVERS are being reminded the Dartford Crossing will be reduced to one lane in each direction overnight Saturday and into Sunday.

Essential maintenance work and testing of emergency procedures will be carried out in both of the two tunnels.

Swans in a flap on rails

COMMUTERS were held up on Thursday afternoon after two swans found themselves trapped on the railway line.

The Medway Valley Line was blocked at Wateringbury, near Maidstone, just after 2.30pm as animal staff moved the two swans and four cynets on.

Industrial estate blaze

FIREFIGHTERS were called to a fire in a disused factory in Bellingham Way in Larkfield on Thursday evening.

The blaze was swiftly brought under control and an investigation has been launched into what started the fire. No-one was reported injured.

Lord Lucan revelations

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE children of Lord Lucan, the aristocrat who disappeared in November 1974 following the brutal death of his nanny, used to spend holidays on the Thanet coast while he and his wife headed to the likes of Monte Carlo, it emerged this week.

Speaking in a rare TV interview, Lady Lucan gave her version of events as to what happened when her husband killed both their children's nanny then tried to attack her too.

He fled never to be heard of again, sparking wild speculation as to whether he was dead or alive. Some speculation suggested he had been transported out of the county by friends such as the gambler John Aspinall, the man behind Howletts and Port Lympne wildlife parks. Wild rumours suggested he had even lived on the zoo parks before his remains were fed to the lions.

But before the couple's relationship soured, Lord and Lady Lucan would send their children, George, Frances and Camilla, to stay at Westgate-on-Sea, near Margate, while they headed to Europe's top resorts.

After spending "five minutes a day" to teach them to read, write and add up, Lady Lucan said on the documentary: "I felt that was the one useful thing that I did.

"That was my interaction with them, and usually in the summer they would go to Westgate-on-Sea with nanny, while my husband and I went to Monte Carlo and played backgammon."

Asked if she missed them while gallivanting around Europe's social hotspots, she pondered and answered: "No, because I knew they were perfectly safe with nanny, really."

The interviewer suggested that appeared to be a cold relationship. She replies: "A cold relationship? All my relationships are cold."

On November 7, 1974, Sandra Rivett had been beaten to death at the family's Belgravia mansion, and Lady Lucan suffered a head injury and fled for her life. An inquest later decided Lord Lucan was responsible, but he has never been seen again. He was declared dead in 1999 and a death certificate issued in 2016 which meant George took over the title.

The ITV documentary, Lord Lucan: My husband, The Truth, can be seen on the commercial network's catch-up service.

MYSTERY: Lord Lucan's children were sent to Thanet - while their parents lived it up in the south of France

Son's tribute to cyclist killed

A cyclist killed in a horror crash near Ashford last month has been hailed as "an inspirational father" by his son.

John Durey, 69, from Lenham died in hospital following a crash on the A2070 at Kingsnorth on May 31.

It was reported that a white Mercedes A180 was travelling along the road towards Hamstreet when it overtook a lorry and was involved in a collision with the cyclist as he was riding in the direction of Ashford.

Mr Durey has been described by his son Oliver as "an inspirational father who has always been extremely patient and nurturing".

Post office to shut for weeks

SOUTHBOROUGH Post Office is to be shut between July 7 and July 20 as it is modernised following the retirement of its existing postmaster.

The outlet in London Road, Tunbridge Wells, means the nearest alternatives will be in Grosvenor Road or High Brooms Road.

Area manager Michael Brennan said: "We are confident this vibrant new-style post office will meet customer needs."

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COMMUNITY: Faith leaders came together to unite against terrorism following a series of deadly attacks in London and Manchester in recent weeks

MP slammed for 'short-sighted' comment on Muslim community

Gordon Henderson caused a stir in his reaction to last week's terror attack, as **Tom Pyman** reports

COMMENTS by a Conservative MP suggesting only British Muslims can defeat Islamic terrorism by reporting those within their community, have been slammed as "short-sighted" by faith leaders.

Gordon Henderson, who successfully defended his seat in Sittingbourne and Sheppey in the general election with a comfortable majority on Thursday, took to social media to spell out his views following the latest series of murders on British soil.

In the third attack in a matter of weeks, three terrorists killed eight victims and injured dozens more in the London Bridge area on Saturday night.

The attackers, who were wearing fake suicide bomb vests, were shot dead by eight officers after police opened fire with a hail of 50 bullets.

It came after the bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester and the Westminster attack carried out by Dartford-born Khalid Masood, who grew up and went to school in Tunbridge Wells.

In a provocative Facebook post this week, Mr Henderson said: "It is time for Muslims in Britain to accept that these murderers come from within their community. They live together; they learn together; and they pray together.

"The only people who can defeat the Islamic terrorists are the British Muslims in whose midst they find sanctuary.

"It is time for peace loving Muslims to start providing information to the police about those within their community that they suspect of plotting attacks.

"The only other option is to put all suspected terrorists in internment camps, and that is not a route I would like to go down. We tried it with the IRA and all it did was make the prisoners into martyrs."

His remarks were not well-received, however, by Ejaz Aslam, chair of the Gravesend and Dartford Muslim Association.

He told KoS: "It's definitely short-sighted because we are not the root cause of it but we are being brandished as part of the problem.

"I was born and bred in this country and there are good people here - tolerance has been one of the greatest assets of this country and something we all have learned by living here.

"However, I do think that the whole community needs to be stricter and there needs to be more communication between the communities and authorities as a whole.

"The worrying thing is there seems to be a pattern of these people being already known to the authorities or involved in some kind of criminality.

"Obviously this is a very testing time for the whole community but we need to all get together and fight this evil."

Indeed, only last month in the wake of the Manchester bombing, Muslim, Sikh and Christian representatives gathered alongside the Gravesham mayor and the Kent Equality Cohesion Council - a not-for-profit organisation which strives to unite communities and eliminate discrimination - to demonstrate that togetherness.

Mr Henderson, who coasted to victory in Swale in 2015 with almost 50 per cent of the vote, agreed there needed to be a sense of unity, both in Kent and beyond, following the attack.

"The most important thing is that everybody in Britain, whatever their nationality, politics or religion, must come together to fight, and destroy, those amongst us who hate our liberal way of life," he said.

"I am sure that the vast majority of Muslims in our area are as sickened as I am by these indescribable acts of evil.

"But as the prime minister said: Enough is enough."

Theresa May's strong words rang loud across the country, and Mr Aslam believed there was a significant responsibility on families in particular in the fight against extremism.

"The first port of call is parents, they need to be in touch with what their kids are up to," he said.

"I find it hard to believe parents would not be able to see a change in their personality or views.

"As far as mosques are concerned, if there are any that advocate violent and extreme views, then they should be dealt with.

"I fear this generation is going to have to give up some of its civil liberties, such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression.

"That is tremendously sad because people have given their lives for freedom and it won't be permanent but I think it's a measure that will be used for a short period of time to stabilise and find out what is going on."

PRESSURE: Swale MP Gordon Henderson

Last summer, a government select committee called for plans to reshape the way communities tackle radicalisation and remove the current system's "toxic" associations in the Muslim community.

The Prevent strategy was launched in 2007 as the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, Contest.

In 2011 the agenda was relaunched to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and aspects of extremism, provide practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.

However, MPs on the Home Affairs Committee said Prevent must be reviewed to produce a new and different inclusive approach that is much more transparent — and it should be renamed Engage, to attempt to remove its already "toxic" associations in the Muslim community.

Allaying these concerns and building trust will require full and wide engagement with all sections of the Muslim community, including at grassroots level — and not just with groups which already agree with the government, they said.

The suggestions were backed by Anwar Khan of the Kent Muslim Welfare Association, based at Gillingham Mosque, who agreed a change in approach was needed.

"I resisted Prevent when it first came in because the attitude was that it was looking for Muslims who will spy on the households of other Muslims," he told us.

"The whole approach was wrong and I resisted the police too, though once we started working together I found they were fantastic, but there needs to be more mutual consultation."

READY: Kent Police is lacking almost a fifth of the number of armed officers required by government, but the force's chief constable says there is no need to be concerned about its capabilities

'County still safe' despite armed officer shortage, says police chief

Tom Pyman speaks exclusively to Alan Pughsley about the force's defence against the terror threat

KENT'S top cop has played down fears the county does not have the resources to cope with the heightened terror threat, afte it emerged the force is lacking almost a fifth of the number of armed officers required by government.

The force currently has 81 of the agreed 100 armed firearm officers required, with the current shortfalls being covered on overtime shifts.

Earlier this week, a former Metropolitan Police chief accused the government of "lying" about the number of armed officers on the streets, in the wake of the latest terror attack to hit the capital.

Peter Kirkham, a chief inspector between 1981 and 2002, claimed the Met was "in crisis", saying the "extra" staff were actually officers putting in 16-hour shifts or working on "rare leave days".

However, in an exclusive interview with KoS, the county's chief constable Alan Pughsley moved to allay fears his officers were being overworked due to a lack of resources.

"If we were talking about 19 officers still missing in six, nine or twelve months' time, I'd share those concerns. I don't have those concerns at all at the moment," he said.

"Firearms officers are regularly assessed both on welfare and a good feeling point of view because of the nature of their business, so I've got no concerns about officers on the street with firearms not being completely able, completely equipped and completely alert to do their job.

"And that is sustainable for some period of time because we've got enough officers to make sure that even with overtime the resilience is there, the work-life balance is there and they're not on duty continually all the time.

"However, we have to recruit the officers because that's not sustainable from a financial point of view or indeed from a welfare point of view."

Police and crime commissioner Matthew Scott authorised a £5 hike in our council tax bills earlier this year, to fund an additional 24 armed officers as the force stepped up its anti-terror defence.

Mr Pughsley and Mr Scott say 22 of those have already been recruited, with the other positions expected to be filled later this year, with training courses remaining ongoing.

Kent Police is having to make savings of some £25m over the next three years, though chiefs are quick to stress these cuts will not affect frontline policing.

Mr Pughsley said: "The plan that we have in place is a sustainable plan for two to three years minimum, unless something dramatically changes from a financial point of view.

"The policing model will keep 3,261 police officers and that's what will stay for the next two to three years.

"It will keep 300 PCSOs and that will stay for the next two to three years.

"That's the minimum requirement those financial savings give us, therefore the public can be reassured that we are putting every element of money that we possibly can into frontline policing.

"On behalf of the commissioner, my job is to operationally put as many officers and staff on the streets as I possibly can, keep people safe and be as visible as we possibly can.

"That's the savings plan that I've given to my staff – they have one headline which is 'protect my frontline at all costs'."

Armed officer patrols were first introduced at key locations in the county last September, and chiefs say they have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the public ever since.

On whether we can expect to see them in more locations over the coming weeks and months, Mr Pughsley said: "It's fluid and it's flexible.

"We've got some obvious places with big footfall such as Bluewater and Ashford [designer outlet] - my officers and members of the public will see routinely armed officers in those places.

"There are other areas in the county that we will take on a threat, harm and risk basis, on an intelligence basis, but I'll keep those sensitive and secret because I need the element of surprise sometimes with regard to criminality.

"It is right I stress, though, there is no direct or imminent threat to Kent specifically, nor indeed our public, nor indeed any areas.

"It would be remiss of me if I don't do everything I possibly can though to make sure we're in a place to immediately react and deal with any subsequent threat."

Mr Pughsley also revealed some of the county's officers were used in response to the attack on London Bridge last Saturday, but was again quick to dismiss fears it would have a knock-on effect on the level of policing in Kent.

"Balancing priority whatever the challenges is something we do on a regular basis," he said.

"I've worked in London for a long time, I speak to London regularly, and their officers and staff made a fantastic response to that and get my absolute praise, thanks and credit for what they did, and I'm very pleased my officers were able to help in some small way.

"To reassure the public, I'd say we're a big organisation, I've got 3,200 police officers.

"When things like that happen, the phones go red hot, people say 'can I come to work? Can I help?' from a discretionary, voluntary part of the business and that happened again [last week], whatever rank, whatever grade.

"My job is to make sure we've got systems and processes in place to make sure we manage that appropriately, because everyone wants to come in at the first minute, and that doesn't help.

"What does help is a very planned response, and I've got dedicated teams who are very experienced in doing that.

"If there becomes a problem resourcing into the county, if it goes on for a long time, we go to what is called mutual aid across other force areas.

"So if there is a significant issue for Kent because the issue is in London, we can call on resources, by way of example, from Cumbria, Liverpool or anywhere else to support the national need, and we support that as well.

"So I am not concerned at all about making sure we can still deliver services locally when we respond to the national issue."

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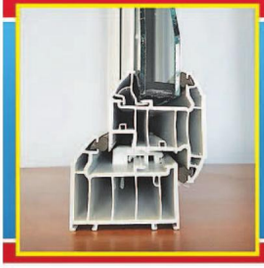

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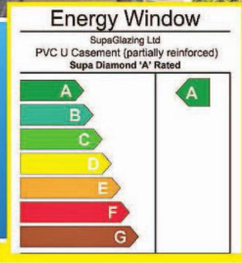

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KOS/15

Tories on top but Labour get benefit of the Corbyn Factor

In a quite remarkable night, the Conservatives once again dominated in Kent, but the real story was the dramatic return of Labour which saw Canterbury go red for the first time in more than a century and a major increase in its vote

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

A SPLASH of red has appeared on Kent's political map for the first time since 2010 after Labour stole Canterbury from the Conservatives in an extraordinary result in this week's general election.

Held by the Tories since the First World War, and by Sir Julian Brazier himself for some three decades, parliament watchers were stunned when Rosie Duffield pipped the 63-year-old stalwart to victory by just 187 votes on Friday morning.

The county otherwise remained blue as expected but the magnitude of Ms Duffield's triumph in such a safe Conservative seat cannot be overstated on what proved a remarkable evening of unexpected twists and turns.

Her party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, received widespread praise for Labour's performance, which saw them win 261 seats - 29 more than they claimed under Ed Miliband in 2015 - despite being almost universally written off, as experts predicted a Tory landslide.

Instead, Theresa May lost the majority she inherited from David Cameron in the House of Commons and, on Friday afternoon, made the short trip to see the Queen at Buckingham Palace to request permission to form a government, propped up by the Democratic Unionist Party.

Her reputation, however, was facing serious damage having called the election with the intention of strengthening her majority ahead of Brexit negotiations with the European Union, even admitting early on in the campaign: "If I lose just six seats I will lose this election and Jeremy Corbyn will be sitting down to negotiate with Europe."

She faced some calls to resign as prime minister less than 12 months after taking the keys at 10 Downing Street, but party chiefs insisted she would remain in the role. How long for, however, remains to be seen.

While unable to form a government themselves, Labour bosses will celebrate putting a dent in the Conservative dominance in Kent with their unlikely victory in Canterbury, and made up significant ground elsewhere in the county, coming second in every other constituency, having previously fallen behind both Ukip and the Liberal Democrats in some seats.

Labour's success was largely attributed to a strong student voice in the city, as the turnout for 18-24-year-olds rose dramatically to 72 per cent nationwide, with images of lengthy queues at university polling stations circulating on social media.

According to Oddschecker, the Conservatives were 1/200 to win in Canterbury on May 19, which implies a 99.5 per cent chance of winning and 1/80 on Thursday as voting started, and still 1/33 once the polls shut at around 10pm.

Labour, on the other hand, was as long as 33/1, which implies a 2.94 per cent chance of winning the seat, with one punter backing Ms Duffield to win at those odds, returning a cool £1,650.

However, despite its triumph in Canterbury, a Labour suggestion last week that it could halt the Lower Thames Crossing may have cost the party precious votes in Dartford, the constituency's candidate said.

The area, blighted by traffic from the existing Dartford Crossing, has long campaigned for a second crossing east of Gravesend, which was approved in April in a bid to move traffic away from the town.

But in the build up to the election, Labour's shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald suggested the party could halt plans and "look again at all options", including a proposed second crossing in Dartford.

Confusion then built as the party announced in the subsequent days it had "no plans" to halt the planned £6.5 billion crossing, adding it would "need to ensure the decision making process has been completely robust and represents the best value for money."

Hours after the election result, which saw Labour finish second to returning Conservative MP Gareth Johnson, candidate Dr Bachchu Kaini admits the claim cost the party in Britain's oldest bellweather seat.

He told KoS: "The Conservatives ran a nasty campaign after what Mr McDonald said, and we didn't have time to respond to residents to explain what we actually planned to do.

"Overall though, I'm happy with the results across the country, I know we ran a good campaign in Dartford and I'm optimistic for the future, I think this could be the beginning of the end of the Tories' spell in Dartford."

Dr Kaini finished with 33.2 per cent of the vote, nearly eight per cent more than in 2015, while Mr Johnson returns to the seat for his third term, after finishing with a 57.6 per cent share of the vote.

Ukip, meanwhile was perfectly clear about its stance on the crossing, even includ-

SUCCESS: Rosie Duffield - Canterbury MP for Labour. Right, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn arrives at Labour Party HQ in Westminster, after he called on the prime minister to resign, saying she should ''go and make way for a government that is truly representative of this country''.
Picture: DOMINIC LIPINSKI/PA WIRE

ing it in its manifesto.

Party chiefs said: "Ukip opposes the proposed new Thames Crossing in Thurrock and will look to re-open a consultation for a new crossing further east.

"This will include the option for a crossing through Canvey Island, linking the A130 to the M2 in Kent."

However, the purple party's vote completely collapsed as the party failed to win a single MP nationwide, and saw its vote share in Kent dramatically slashed, as part of its continued post-referendum identity crisis.

Similarly, its representation on Kent County Council was completely wiped out last month - a dramatic shift in voting compared to 2013 when they were elected as the main party of opposition to the Conservatives, winning 17 seats at County Hall.

Party leader Paul Nuttall announced his resignation immediately after the result was announced, fuelling speculation of yet another return for Nigel Farage.

Asked about a future role for the former leader, Mr Nuttall said: "If Nigel Farage wants to come back, I would be more than happy to do a job swap.

"I'll take his slot on LBC and he can come back as leader of Ukip."

Earlier, Mr Farage said he did not blame his colleague, who failed for a sixth time to win a seat in Westminster, for the party's poor showing.

"I don't think Paul did anything wrong at all, he didn't have time to establish himself with the public," he said on LBC radio.

Asked about the prospects of a

comeback, he added: "Whether leading or playing a prominent role is perhaps a different question."

The south east MEP was in Ramsgate last weekend to drum up support for the party's South Thanet candidate, Rev Stuart Piper, insisting he had no regrets about not standing himself, as he did two years earlier.

However, it went from winning 16,026 votes under Mr Farage in 2015, to just 2,997 on Thursday - a massive 26.4 per cent swing, with the Ukip vote being shared between both Labour and the Conservatives who enjoyed improved results in what was considered by many perhaps the county's biggest battleground once again.

Tory winner Craig Mackinlay claimed organisations "tried to break my legs for this election" after being returned as MP, just days after he was issued with criminal charges by the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Conservative was charged last week over a spending row at the last general election in 2015, when he successfully saw off the challenge of Mr Farage.

In a statement responding to the CPS' announcement, Mr Mackinlay maintained he had not done anything wrong, and slammed the "shocking" timing of the decision, which orders him to appear before Westminster Magistrates' Court on July 4.

Mr Farage insisted it would mean a "straight fight" between Ukip and Labour for the South Thanet seat, but voters clearly thought otherwise as Mr Mackinlay was re-elected with an increased majority.

Speaking after the result was declared in Margate in the early hours of Friday morning, Mr Mackinlay said: "I must admit when I saw the exit polls earlier on I didn't know which speech to write.

"Despite the best efforts of various organisations to break my legs for this election just a few days ago, we did it here in South Thanet.

"My big thanks are to the voters of Thanet for continuing to put their trust in me.

"I've done my best to serve for the last two years and the best I possibly can as their local representative, their champion in Westminster, and I'm so proud to have been returned with an even bigger majority."

Mr Mackinlay won 25,262 votes, putting him comfortably ahead of nearest rival, Labour's Raushan Ara, who won 18,875 votes.

COUNT: Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale, right, and South Thanet's Craig Mackinlay. Both won but both also saw a sharp rise in Labour support
Pictures: ADY KERRY

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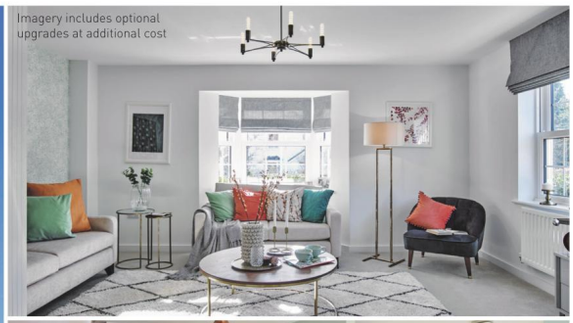

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General election 2017 results

How Kent's new political landscape looks

1 Ashford

TURNOUT: 68.5%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Sally Gathern (Labour)	17.840	29.8	+11.4%
Adrian Gee-Turner (LD)	3,101	5.2	-0.8%
Damian Green (Cons)	35,318	59	+6.5%
Gerald O'Brien (Ukip)	2,218	3.7	-15.1%
Mandy Rossi (Green)	1,402	2.3	-2%

MAJORITY 17,478 HOLD

2 Beckenham

TURNOUT: 76%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Bob Stewart (Con)	30,632	59.3	+2
Julie Ireland (Lib Dem)	4,073	7.9	+1
Marina Ahmad (Lab)	15,545	30.1	+10.7
Ruth Fabricant (Green)	1,380	2.7	-1.2

MAJORITY 15,087 HOLD

3 Bexleyheath & Crayford

TURNOUT: 69.2%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
David Evennett (Con)	25,113	55.6	+8.3
Stef Borella (Lab)	16,040	35.5	+9.3
Mike Ferro (Ukip)	1,944	4.3	-16.7
Simone Reynolds (LD)	1,201	2.7	-0.3
Ivor Lobo (Green)	601	1.3	-0.8
Peter Finch (BNP)	290	0.6	+0.6

MAJORITY 9,073 HOLD

4 Bromley & Chislehurst

TURNOUT: 71.6%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Bob Neill (Con)	25,175	54.0	+1.0
Sara Hyde (Lab)	15,585	33.4	+11.2
Sam Webber (Lib Dem)	3,369	7.2	+0.8
Emmett Jenner (Ukip)	1,383	3.0	-11.3
Roisin Robertson (Green)	1,150	2.5	-1.7

MAJORITY 9,590 HOLD

5 Canterbury

TURNOUT: 72.7%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Rosie Duffield (Lab)	25,572	45	+20.5
Julian Brazier (Con)	25,385	44.7	+1.8
James Flanagan (Lib Dem)	4,561	8.0	-3.6
Henry Stanton (Green)	1,282	2.3	-4.7

MAJORITY 187 LAB GAIN

6 Chatham & Aylesford

TURNOUT: 63.7%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Tracey Crouch (Con)	25,587	57	+6.8
Vince Maple (Lab)	15,129	33.7	+10.1
Nicole Bushill (Ukip)	2,225	5.0	-15.0
Thomas Quinton (Lib Dem)	1,116	2.5	-0.7
Bernard Hyde (Green)	573	1.3	-1.3
John Gibson (CPA)	260	0.6	+0.3

MAJORITY 10,458 HOLD

7 Dartford

TURNOUT: 69.8%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Gareth Johnson (Con)	31,210	57.6	+8.6
Bachchu Kaini (Lab)	18,024	33.2	+7.8
Ben Fryer (Ukip)	2,544	4.7	-15.2
Simon Beard (Lib Dem)	1,428	2.6	-0.1
Andrew Blatchford (Green)	807	1.5	-1.0
Ola Adewunmi (Ind)	211	0.4	+0.4

MAJORITY 13,186 HOLD

8 Dover

TURNOUT: 69.7%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Charlie Elphicke (Con)	27,211	52.4	+9.1
Stacey Blair (Lab)	20,774	40.0	+9.2
Piers Wauchope (Ukip)	1,722	3.3	-16.9
Simon Dodd (Lib Dem)	1,336	2.6	-0.6
Beccy Sawbridge (Green)	923	1.8	-0.8

MAJORITY 6,437 HOLD

9 Erith & Thamesmead

TURNOUT: 63.8%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Teresa Pearce (Lab)	25,585	57.5	+7.8
Edward Baxter (Con)	15,571	35.0	+7.6
Ronie Johnson (Ukip)	1,728	3.9	-13.4
Simon Waddington (Lib Dem)	750	1.7	-0.6
Claudine Letsae (Green)	507	1.1	-1.1
Temi Olodu (CPA)	243	0.5	-0.1
Doro Oddiri (Ind)	80	0.2	+0.2

MAJORITY 10,014 HOLD

10 Faversham & Mid Kent

TURNOUT: 65.5%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Helen Whately (Con)	30,390	61.1	+6.7
Michael Desmond (Lab)	12,977	26.1	+9.9
David Naghi (Lib Dem)	3,249	6.5	-0.1
Mark McGiffin (Ukip)	1,702	3.4	-14.6
Alastair Gould (Green)	1,431	2.9	-1.0

MAJORITY 17,413 HOLD

11 Folkestone & Hythe

TURNOUT:68.3%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Damian Collins (Con)	32,197	54.7	+6.8
Laura Davison (Lab)	16,786	28.5	+14.1
Lynne Beaumont (Lib Dem)	4,222	7.2	-1.7
Stephen Priestley (Ukip)	2,565	4.4	-18.4
Martin Whybrow (Green)	2,498	4.2	-1.1
David Plumstead (Ind)	493	0.8	+0.8
Naomi Slade (Ind)	114	0.2	+0.2

MAJORITY 15,411 HOLD

12 Gillingham & Rainham

TURNOUT: 66.9%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Rehman Chishti (Con)	27,091	55.4	+7.5
Andrew Stamp (Lab)	17,661	36.1	+10.5
Martin Cook (Ukip)	2,097	4.3	-15.2
Paul Chaplin (Lib Dem)	1,372	2.8	-0.8
Clive Gregory (Green)	520	1.1	-1.3
Roger Peacock (CPA)	127	0.3	+0.3

MAJORITY 9,430 HOLD

13 Gravesham

TURNOUT: 67.2%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Adam Holloway (Con)	27,237	55.6	+8.8
Mandy Garford (Lab)	17,890	36.5	+6.4
Emmanuel Feyisetan (Ukip)	1,742	3.6	-15.0
James Willis (Lib Dem)	1,210	2.5	+0.3
Marna Gilligan (Green)	723	1.5	-0.8
Michael Rogan (Ind)	195	0.4	+0.4

MAJORITY 9,347 HOLD

14 Maidstone & The Weald

TURNOUT: 68.6%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Helen Grant (Con)	29,136	56.4	+10.9
Allen Simpson (Lab)	11,432	22.1	+11.6
Emily Fermor (Lib Dem)	8,455	16.4	-7.7
Pamela Watts (Ukip)	1,613	3.1	-12.7
Stuart Jeffery (Green)	888	1.7	-1.1
Yolande Kenward (Ind)	172	0.3	+0.3

MAJORITY 17,704 HOLD

15 Rochester & Strood

TURNOUT: 64.9%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Kelly Tolhurst (Con)	29,232	54.4	+10.3
Teresa Murray (Lab)	19,382	36.0	+16.3
David Allen (Ukip)	2,893	5.4	-25.1
Bart Ricketts (Lib Dem)	1,189	2.2	-0.2
Sonia Hyner (Green)	781	1.5	-1.4
Steve Benson (CPA)	163	0.3	+0.3
Primerose Chiguri (Ind)	129	0.2	+0.2

MAJORITY 9,850 HOLD

16 Old Bexley & Sidcup

TURNOUT: 72.8%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
James Brokenshire (Con)	29,545	61.5	+8.7
Danny Hackett (Lab)	14,079	29.3	+10.3
Freddy Vachha (Ukip)	1,619	3.4	-14.9
Drew Heffernan (Lib Dem)	1,572	3.3	-0.2
Derek Moran (Green)	820	1.7	-1.2
Michael Jones (BNP)	324	0.7	+0.2
Chinwe Nwadikeduruibe (CPA)	83	0.2	+0.2

MAJORITY 15,466 HOLD

19 Sittingbourne & Sheppey

TURNOUT: 62.7%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Gordon Henderson (Con)	30,911	60.2	+10.7
Mike Rolfe (Lab)	15,700	30.6	+11.0
Mike Baldock (Ind)	2,133	4.2	+4.2
Keith Nevols (Lib Dem)	1,392	2.7	-0.5
Mark Richard Lindop (Green)	558	1.1	-1.3
Mad Mike Young (Monster)	403	0.8	+0.2
Lee McCall (Ind)	292	0.6	+0.6

MAJORITY 15,211 HOLD

21 South Thanet

TURNOUT: 68.8%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Craig Mackinlay (Con)	25,262	50.8	+12.6
Raushan Ara (Lab)	18,875	37.9	+14.2
Stuart Piper (Ukip)	2,997	6.0	-26.4
Jordan Williams (Lib Dem)	1,514	3.0	+1.2
Trevor Roper (Green)	809	1.6	-0.6
Tim Garbutt (Ind)	181	0.4	+0.4
Faith Fisher (CPA)	115	0.2	+0.2

MAJORITY 6,387 HOLD

17 Orpington

TURNOUT: 74.3%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Jo Johnson (Con)	31,762	62.9	+5.5
Nigel De Gruchy (Lab)	12,309	24.4	+8.8
Alex Feakes (Lib Dem)	3,315	6.6	-0.2
Brian Philp (Ukip)	2,023	4.0	-12.7
Tamara Galloway (Green)	1,060	2.1	-1.4

MAJORITY 19,453 HOLD

18 Sevenoaks

TURNOUT: 72.1%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Michael Fallon (Con)	32,644	63.7	+6.8
Chris Clark (Lab)	10,727	20.9	+8.1
Alan Bullion (Lib Dem)	4,280	8.4	+0.5
Graham Cushway (Ukip)	1,894	3.7	-14.2
Philip Dodd (Green)	1,673	3.3	-1.2

MAJORITY 21,917 HOLD

20 North Thanet

TURNOUT: 66.5%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Roger Gale (Con)	27,163	56.2	+7.2
Frances Rehal (Lab)	16,425	34.0	+16.1
Clive Egan (Ukip)	2,198	4.5	-21.2
Martyn Pennington (Lib Dem)	1,586	3.3	-0.2
Ed Targett (Green)	825	1.7	-1.9
Iris White (CPA)	128	0.3	+0.3

MAJORITY 10,738 HOLD

22 Tunbridge Wells

TURNOUT: 72.1%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Greg Clark (Con)	30,856	56.9	-1.8
Charles Woodgate (Lab)	14,391	26.5	+12.3
Rachel Sadler (Lib Dem)	5,355	9.9	+1.4
Chris Hoare (Ukip)	1,464	2.7	-9.9
Trevor Bisdee (Green)	1,441	2.7	-2.5
Celine Thomas (Women's Eq)	702	1.3	+1.3

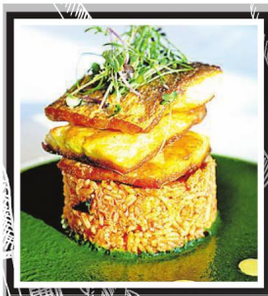
MAJORITY 16,465 HOLD

23 Tonbridge & Malling

TURNOUT: 73.7%

NAME	VOTES	%VOTES	X/-
Tom Tugendhat (Con)	36,218	63.6	+4.2
Dylan Jones (Lab)	12,710	22.3	+8.2
Keith Miller (Lib Dem)	3,787	6.7	-0.2
April Clark (Green)	2,335	4.1	-0.3
Colin Bullen (Ukip)	1,857	3.3	-11.9

MAJORITY 23,508 HOLD



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How Kent stands in 2017

ONLY when Labour truly shines has Kent ever been daubed with red.

And in the early hours of Friday morning a seismic shock saw a huge blob of rouge right at the heart of the county.

Be under no illusions, Rosie Duffield's victory in Canterbury was one of the most remarkable in the UK and almost unthinkable just hours beforehand.

Sir Julian Brazier had served as Conservative MP in the constituency for 30 years and was seen as a nailed on certainty to serve through to retirement.

That all changed in one of the most remarkable nights in British politics.

Whatever your views on Jeremy Corbyn he was the success story of this election.

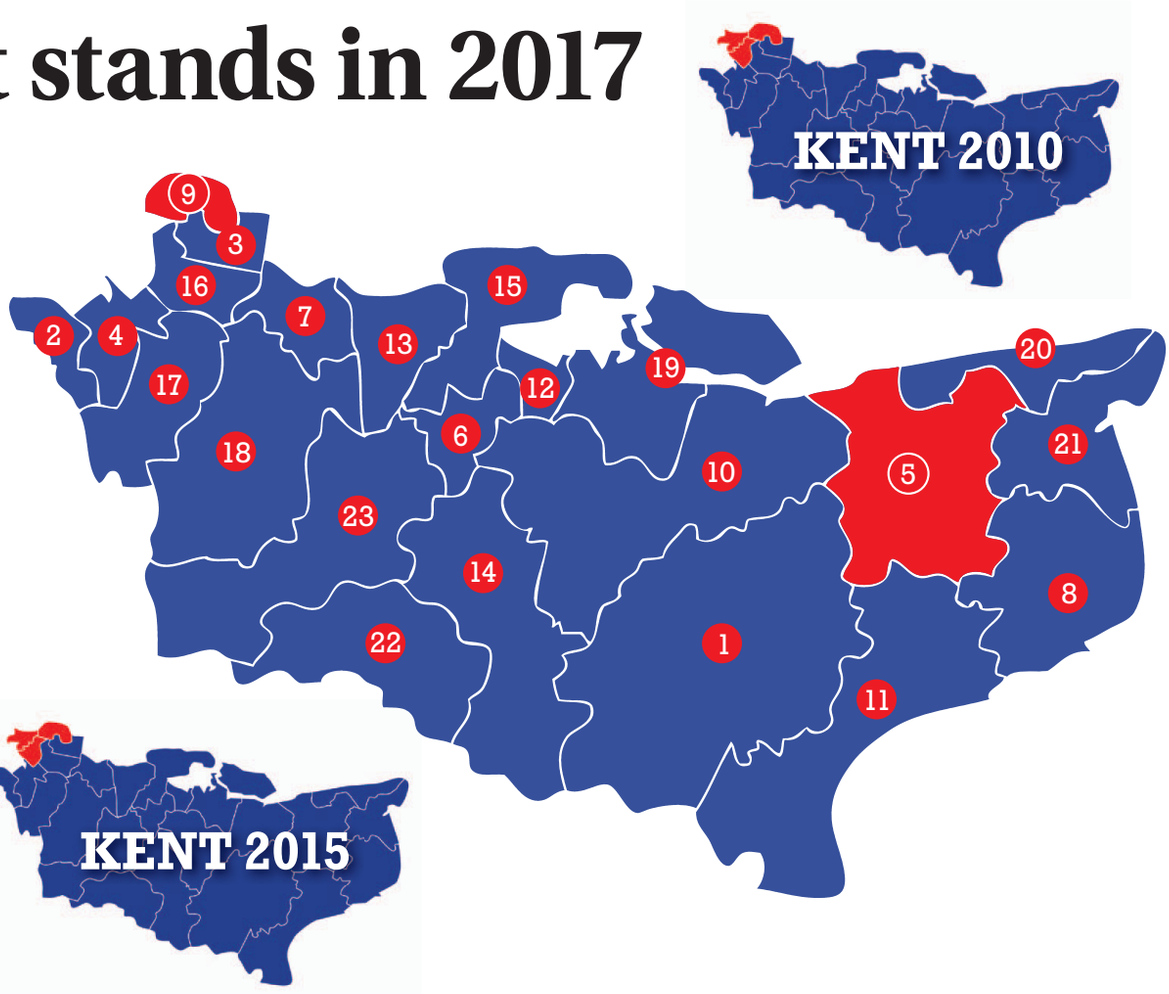
His ability to inspire the Momentum group to harness all the key methods required to spring an electoral success - social media, youthful support, a point of difference - proved capable of piercing what once seemed an invicible suit of armour worn by Theresa May.

The rest of the county stayed blue, but not without a remarkable rise in support of Labour across the board. It was runner-up or winner in every seat. Ukip's support disappeared and is unlikely to be seen again.

The Liberal Democrats failed miserably to prove it was bouncing back, with only marginal increases in its vote.

Thus the two big beasts of British politics slugged it out in a David versus Goliath battle. And the blood of the Tories was spilt in the county for all to see.

Perhaps, just perhaps, the Conservatives may regret not sending any of its box office big-hitters to the county in the run-up to the election. If Jeremy Corbyn turns up, he may get a hero's welcome.



Upnor Sailing Club

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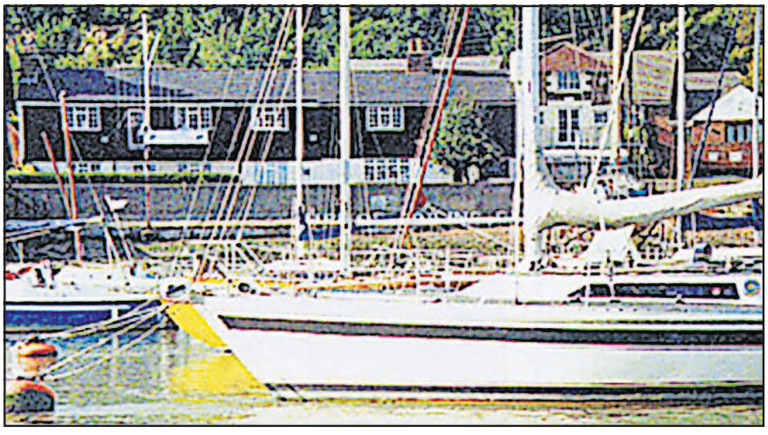

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Why more and more of us are paying to be locked up

Born in Japan, the popularity of so-called escape rooms have seen them spread across the globe. And there's an ever increasing number opening up right here

IN a world of increasingly virtual entertainment, where we consume games, TV and movies through broadband pipes straight into our isolated homes, the fact a platform which encourages us to get out and about and interact should be a welcomed.

The escape game, or escape room, phenomenon has expanded dramatically in recent years - based on a simple premise, good old-fashioned team-work and a healthy dollop of brain power - Kent has seen an explosion of the sites opening up across the county.

From Canterbury to Gravesend, Ashford to Medway, the games, once the preserve of those in the big cities, are now on our doorsteps.

But just what is an escape game and why are they so popular?

The idea is simple - teams (normally anywhere between two and eight) are put into a specially prepared room and locked in. In order to 'escape' within the alloted one hour, they must solve a host of puzzles to enable them to find keys or padlock combinations.

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Each room has a theme - so perhaps you're trying to solve a murder or escape from a zombie apocolypse.

Pressure Point is new to the scene with its outlet in Ashford.

A spokesman explained; "Each time you step into a room, the rule book is out of the window and anything can happen. You need to bring your thinking caps, communication caps, team working caps, patience caps; the more caps you bring the more likely your are to escape."

Chris Knell, 29, runs Escape Kent in Canterbury with his brother Michael, a keen gamer.

They have a warehouse in Simmonds Road, Canterbury, and several scenarios for those wanting to take part.

Chris Knell explains: "If people know too much about the escape rooms before they arrive, it will take away some of the surprise or shock. There is plenty to do - the kidnapped room is around 35 square metres and they are not just one single room, I will say that at least.

"Think of it as a giant Crystal Maze, like the television series, but with added drama, shock and surprise. The kidnap room is a little gory and a little bit gruesome. A lot of people compare it to the Saw films.

"The teams need to solve the puzzles to move on, but if anyone is too scared they can always back out, and leave the way they came in. People don't generally do that. The team size is limited to eight to more easily allow everyone to join in and contribute.

"We also only allow teams where everyone already knows each other, again to avoid the chances of some stranger dominating what is going on.

"It is always surprising how well or how badly a team can do."

It has popular kidnapped and alien rooms and a pirate theme coming for July.

He added: "There are moments where you are made to jump, so be ready to be startled. But that is part of the fun of taking part."

First started in Japan 10 years ago, they sprung out of the Far East in 2011 - first to North America and now to Europe.

They sprang to prominence in this country when the likes of HintHunt and ClueQuest started flying to the top of Tripadvisor ratings as they best things to do in the city. Due to the nature of the puzzle, revealing much about what lurks within is frowned upon, but it only adds to the mystique and keeps players of all ages coming back for more.

In Medway there is Escape Plan Live - situated in three venues including the rather haunting Fort Amherst.

A spokesman explained: "To tell you too much may ruin the experience - but Escape Plan Live is an immersive mystery experience."

In Gravesend, The Panic Room is also seeing great business with six scenarios for players to experience.

A spokesman added: "There are some scares in the Dollhouse game we run, but others are just a mix of simple and complex puzzle solving rooms with varied themes that people will find fun and entertaining."

Back in Canterbury, the Knell brothers said the cost of setting up their rooms was between "tens and hundreds of thousands". And once up and running there's still plenty of

HIT: Dame Kelly Holmes joins the team at Escape Kent in Canterbury

work to be done.

Chris Knell explains: "Maintenance is a daily routine with some guests being a little too heavy handed or things failing, so we do keep on top of it.

"Since our launch we found our weekends are very busy and during the week attracts the corporate bookings."

Depending on where and when you go, and how many of you take part, prices range from £15 to £25 per person.

BOOM OF THE ESCAPE ROOM

IN 2007, a Japanese businessman Takao Koto launched Real Escape Games, which then spread like wildfire after taking off around the world in 2011. That year, a Hungarian franchise company opened 20 locations across Europe and Australia.

They can become stressful places to be - in China, there have been reports of students destroying entire rooms in a bid to get out after being repeatedly stumped by the puzzles.

It is estimated there are just under 3,000 escape rooms around the world.

Those in London have become hugely popular with long waiting lists at busy periods to play. They come complete with video monitoring so when players get stumped, hints or advice can be provided to point you in the right direction.

The gadgetry can be pretty clever too, with laptops and mobile phone provided to help solve some of the clues.

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Sitting in the shadow of Dover Castle lies the Cask Marque accredited White Horse Inn. Dating back to 1365 it is Dover's oldest public house. Today you will find them serving up home cooked food using local suppliers and a ready supply of real ales lagers wines and spirits. The White Horse is not just a traditional pub with an open fire & roof beams though. The main bar decor has a pleasingly eccentric twist whereby successful channel swimmers have come in to sign the walls as a record of their success.

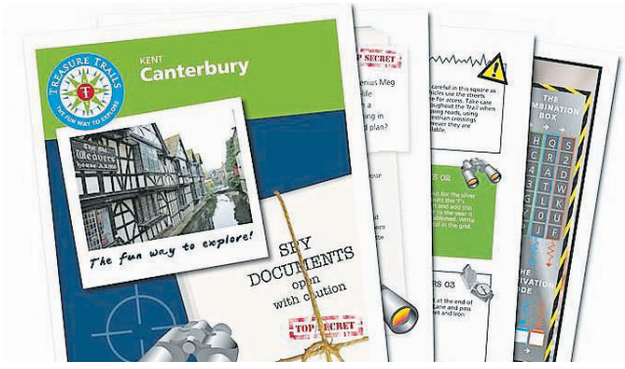
Hours can be spent reading over the names & times. A hidden terrace garden sits to the rear with the spectacular backdrop to the ruins of St James Church which overlooks this sun trap garden. The perfect place to sip one of their extensive range of extravagant gins. Trip Advisor recommendations ensure a continued stream of hungry & thirsty visitors to enjoy this historic grade 2 listed public house.

01304 213066
The White Horse Inn, St James Street, Castle Hill Road, Dover CT16 1QD

On the hunt for treasure as families get on guided trails

With summer around the corner, here's a great reason to get out and about

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



WHO can resist a treasure trail? Less and less of us it would seem as more and more people take part in the trails which are springing up around the UK.

There are already eight in the county, among the 1,000 across the UK, and more are being added regularly.

So just what are they?

The simple answer is they are an opportunity to get out and about and explore nearby countryside or places of interest. Each has a theme and as you follow the route, you solve clues to either discover the buried treasure or solve the mystery.

And it all started from a small office in Truro, Cornwall, to turn into a business giant of today.

Aaron Hutchens is general manager of Treasure Trails, the firm which organises them. He explained: "We have lots in Kent, and they are amazingly popular.

"It is a very simple concept, but the effect they can have on groups and families never fails to amaze me."

The company was launched in 2005 by a former military man who wanted to help support his family.

A change in direction in 2008 saw former company designer Mr Hutchens take over and turn it in to a national phenomenon with over 1,000 trails around the UK.

Now there are eight in Kent; two in Medway, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne Bay and Canterbury. They each cost a basic £6.99 and many can be customised for an extra fee.

Mr Hutchens said: "Depending on what people want, they can follow a theme, like Cluedo out in the open, pirates or spies all with 20 or 25 clues.

"With our murder mystery, we usually write it so there is one suspect at the end, but after one man approached us, we tweaked it to have two as he wanted to use it to propose to his girlfriend.

"The answer was 'Will Hugh and Mary Mee' which led the person being proposed to not quite getting it at first, but then when you read them out loud, it suddenly all makes sense, which is lovely."

The general manager said: "I knew nothing about these when I started here, but now I love them.

"With summer coming up, we get really busy as parents look for something fun to do to keep their children happy.

"Some people may wonder what the point of these treasure trails is, but we are selling an experience. Some people may think they know all about the place where they live, but we can open their eyes to places they never knew existed.

"And likewise, those off to visit somewhere new can experience it from a new perspective and have fun finding all those little local secrets that won't always be on the tour guide.

"It is a way of getting people out and about and exploring. We have had people contact us wondering how we can ask £6.99 for some paper, but they are often back again to try it all again in a new place. It is an fun as you want to make it.

"We are constantly getting feedback from families who say it is the first time they have bonded and all laughed together in ages, and that is amazing to hear about. We had no idea that would happen so often - that makes it so rewarding for us too.

"Parents with children who may be autistic find them to be especially helpful as it engages their children in a way they have not managed to do before.

"It can pull a family away from their technology too.

"We also have to keep tweaking all our trails to keep up with what is happening locally, so if a building or place is changed or altered, we need

DISCOVERY: The guides set up a host of clues to find and there are a host of trails in the county

to know about it, so there is an enormous amount of work to be done keeping on top of these changes.

"Some 80 per cent are walking trails of about two miles, but we do have some that need a vehicle or bicycle, so customers need to decide what is best for them."

He said: "The concept is very simple and children aged six upwards can get involved. The trials are written in adult language but youngsters can fully join in, too."

He added: "We are always looking to expand and Kent is a lovely part of the country. As well as the trails we currently have in Kent, there are plans for three more already in the pipeline and will be announced soon.

"Presently, our more popular trail in Kent is Canterbury with the spy themed mission which is great for would-be James Bonds of any age."

■ **For more information visit www.treasuretrails.co.uk.**

OTHER TREASURES TO FIND

The Folkestone Triennial returns this summer, and for many the memories of the last live on in their mind. That was when real gold was buried in a beach at the town and locals told if they could find it they could keep it.

The brainchild of Germany artist Michael Sailstorfer, he buried 30 24-carat gold bars on the Outer Harbour Beach. In total they were worth around £10,000.

Cunningly, when he made the announcement in August 2014, the tide was in, which meant by the time it had gone out, word had got around and hundreds descended in pursuit of the buried treasure.

By Christmas that year there had been eight confirmed findings although it is thought more had been found but not recorded. However, it is widely believed there remains plenty of the gold out there just waiting to be discovered. Each are a mere inch long and weigh about as much as a pound coin.

Lewis Biggs, curator of the triennial said: "Because it's Folkestone and there's a tradition of digging in the sand, sandcastles and so on, he has appropriated that way of working with landscape, and encouraged people by burying gold bars in the sand. These are only accessible at low tide. So it's a perpetually renewing sculpture, it's different each day because the tide comes and washes it away."

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OLD FATHER TIME

MISSED: Prince died in April 2016, aged just 57. The musical will feature some of the artist's best known work.

Prince, the musical, all set to bathe stage in Purple Rain

Chris Britcher on how a celebration of the star's music will debut in Bromley

IT was perhaps inevitable, but a little over a year after his tragic death, it has been announced that a musical devoted to the music of Minneapolis maestro Prince is to debut in Bromley next February.

Featuring a 26-strong group of musicians, singers and dancers, Purple Rain is described as a "live celebration" of the work of the star.

Hits featured will include Raspberry Beret, Kiss and Little Red Corvette.

It will be directed by Gary Lloyd, the man behind Michael Jackson stage show Thriller - Live, who hopes fans will enjoy the theatrical tribute to their hero.

He said: "Prince's music and constant reinvention is legendary, so to get the opportunity to bring that and all his colourful characters to the theatrical stage is a dream.

"There is also a real appetite for live music shows that showcase the musicians as part of the performance. Prince was all about this.

"Prince was a consummate, theatrical artist, but in our show his music is the star.

"There will be so much for audiences to enjoy, whether they're fans of musical theatre, Prince or both.

"Purple Rain is a fast-paced, music lover's night out that will tease, surprise and excite audiences in the same way he did."

Prince's work is no stranger to the stage, with the artist having seen his work used in Billboards, a Joffrey Ballet production which featured a specially extended 10-minute version of the song Thunder in 1993.

In the same year he created Ulysses, a musical production based loosely on Homer's Odyssey which featured a host of then-new songs and which was performed at his Glam Slam night club in Los Angeles for a limited run.

Affections in the county run high after he performed his only UK festival show as headliner at the 2011 Hop Farm Festival in Paddock Wood, where he pocketed a cool $1million for a night's work.

It was his first live performance in the UK since his 2007 run of 21 shows at the O2 Arena in Greenwich - a string of shows which continues to be the longest run at the venue - and universally hailed as a great success.

During the festival set he ran through dozens of his greatest hits to round off a sun-soaked event.

The musician died on April 21, 2016 aged 57. He was found collapsed in an elevator at his home and recording complex, Paisley Park, in his hometown of Minneapolis.

His death prompted an outpouring of grief and saw sales of his back catalogue rocket.

Legal wrangles over his estate - he did not leave a will - have left some concerned as to what will happen with his legacy.

A greatest hits album was released last year, and later this month the highly anticipated remastered Purple Rain album - his career defining breakthrough from 1984 - is released. Various packages will include a host of previously unreleased tracks. There is also an additional version with a live DVD featuring one of his Purple Rain live shows.

The musical will begin its UK tour in Bromley's Churchill Theatre on February 1 2018 before travelling to Manchester, Plymouth, Cheltenham, Birmingham, Blackpool, Edinburgh, Wimbledon, Cardiff, Belfast, Hull and Ipswich.

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Women Seeking

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SUSAN, 72yrs, divorcee, tall, slim and attractive. Seeking gent for lunches, friendship, leading to more. I'm solvent with my own home. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427343**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851**

OLIVIA, very mature but young at heart lady seeks nice gent for wining, dining more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427303**

KATIE 35YRS, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

TALL slim lady 61yrs and of Irish origins. GSOH, likes travel, open minded and kind. Hoping to meet similar minded gent of any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427307**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

JULIE, 54yrs, loves life, honest, caring open minded and can be discreet when needed. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427309**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

CALLING all Muslim men. I'm Margaret 41yrs. I can accommodate and travel, daytime fun. I'm discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427311**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

PAT, 72yrs, attractive blue-eyed lady, good for her age! Varied interests. Looking for gentleman companion. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427313**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

JEANIE, 67yrs easygoing happy widow. Call if you are interested in chatting to me or meeting for a meal. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427315**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

JOAN, black lady young looking 50yrs, loves life. Call to hear more and perhaps meet up. ACA **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427317**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 426201**

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ELAINE, 54yrs attractive brunette lady, originally from Scotland, petite and shy. WLTM sensitive male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427319**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

SASHA 44yrs feminine attractive lady, loves nights out, cosy nights at home. Call me if you are interested in me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427335**

PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. Pls text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

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SIMONE, attractive lady seeking genuine man, I'm in my 60s but young looking. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427337**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

MARGARET, late 60s widow who looks much younger! Blue eyed blonde, varied interests, solvent. WLTM n/s gent who is down to earth. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427339**

JULIE, 68yrs but very fit and young looking. Married to an older gent so hoping to meet someone much much younger. Text Me. **Text Only: 4193435**

SANDRA but call me Sandy. I'm 67yrs young petite dark haired smart lady with curves. Hoping to meet a gent who is kind with GSOH **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427341**

KAREN, late 50's seeking discreet gent any age/area for daytime meetings. **Text Only. Box: 4194757**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426845**

JANET, late 40's divorcee, own home and car looking to spice up my life with some fun. Discreet men only please, I'm not ready for a full on relationship, casual chats. **Text Only. Box: 4189331**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

FELICITY, "my friends call me posh" I'm not really. Call me to see. I'm 58yrs, curvy, blonde extensions and very good for my age. ACA. **Text Only. Box: 4043583**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

Men Seeking

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SOLVENT male, older but young at heart, looking for a young lady to wine and dine and spoil and pamper and in turn to pamper me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427443**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no stings attached fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173**

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. **Text only. Mailbox: 4509325**

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

WELL off man, wanting a young lady for spoiling. I am a sugar daddy looking for a sugar baby. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427441**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

CARING sociable, GS0H, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789**

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175**

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PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

BRIAN, 6ft3, fit, bit grey but genuine and kind, looking for a naughty female, for no strings adult fun, if you're interested please get back to me, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423483**

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GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

ROBBIE, 54, reasonably fit, bi-curious, I'm very inexperienced and would like to meet a CD or TV preferably but not essential for a bit of fun. Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421357**

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FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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Bewl sets sail for summer fun day with additional bounce

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

AN inflatable obstacle course, live music and reservoir cruises will all form part of a summer fun day at Lamberhurst's Bewl Water later this month.

The country park, which surrounds the reservoir, will be hosting its Welcome Summer celebrations on Sunday, June 25,

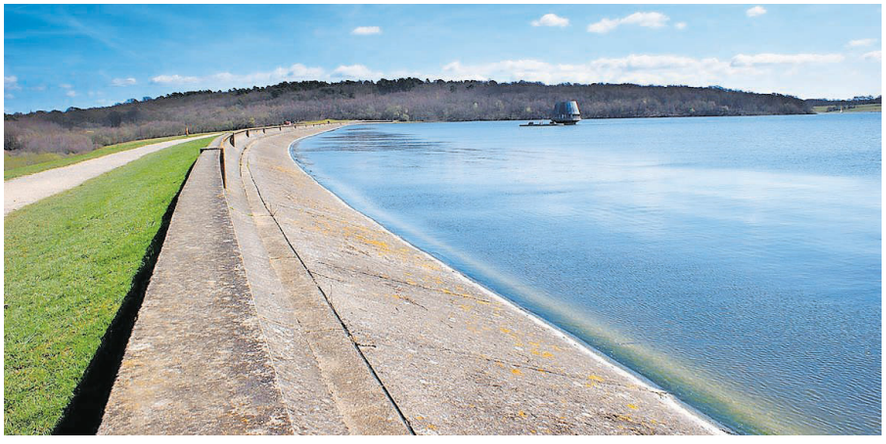
The park changed ownership in 2015 and re-opened last year.

Designed to appeal to all age groups, organisers say they hope the event will prove a great success.

Phil Davey of Bewl Water explains: "Our first summer here last year was something really special, and that's made us all the more excited for this year.

"The whole country park really comes into its own when the sun is shining, with plenty of ways to get out and enjoy the water, or great trails and quiet spots to explore on dry land.

"We can't wait for the summer to arrive, which is why we are throwing a giant party to celebrate."



ATTRACTION: Bewl will be hanging out the bunting for the Welcome Summer celebrations on June 25

Among the activities taking place will be live music performed by local artists, a 45ft inflatable obstacle course, the chance to have a go at the park's new Laser Tag Challenge and a children's bouncy castle.

In addition, there will be a penalty shoot-out, a host of Mini Ranger cars for children aged four and above to enjoy, as well as a barbeque, Pimms' stall and ice cream stand.

Additionally, and as you would expect for a popular watersports venue, there's plenty to do on the water too with pedalos and rowing boats available.

For those who would rather let someone else take the strain of cutting through the water, there are cruises also on offer on board the Bewl Belle.

The Welcome Summer event runs from 11am to 6pm.

Car parking at the site costs £2 and activities and food are all priced individually. The obstacle course will cost £2 per go, or three goes for £5.

The bouncy castle is £5 for unlimited bouncing all day.

For details of the event visit the country park's website at www.bewlwater.co.uk.

Diana's Dusty musical hit

DIANA Vickers is to star in Son Of A Preacher Man - a musical-featuring the music of Dusty Springfield. It will open at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on September 4 on a tour which includes Tunbridge Wells.

Gainsborough dramatised

LETTERS by painter Thomas Gainsborough to his artistic contemporaries are animated on stage at The Barn Theatre at Smallhythe Place in Tenterden this month.

Gainsborough: An Invitation runs from June 22-24. Tickets cost £12 and are on sale now. To buy call 01580 762334.

Brogdale's berry nice day

BROGDALE, near Faversham hosts its Strawberry Fair today (Sunday) giving visitors the chance to taste rare and heritage varieties of the popular fruit, alongside a host of other entertainment.

Choir is Bach for its 25th

THE All Saint's Festival Choir and Orchestra will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor on Saturday, June 24.

The concert takes place at 7.30pm at the Parish Church of All Saints in Orpington. Tickets are available on the door.

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Tina tribute at the Stag

A TRIBUTE to the mighty Tina Turner takes to the stage in Sevenoaks on Thursday, June 15. Totally Tina will be at the Stag Theatre with Justine Riddoch stepping into the shoes of the superstar.

Book now for uni sports

THE University of Kent will be running its popular annual SummerZone activities for children offering a wide variety of sports.

The sports camp includes football, cricket, tennis, hockey and tag rugby, and is on offer for children aged between five and 14 years old. It runs from August 7 to 18.

Causeway Hall is reborn

DAME Kelly Holmes officially opened the Chiddingstone Causeway Arts and Social Centre, The Causeway Hall, last weekend.

It follows six years of fundraising some £750,000.

Alice strolls into Mote Park

AN open-air production of Alice Through The Looking Glass takes place at Maidstone's Mote Park on August 5.

Tickets for the 3pm show, presented by the Mote Park Fellowship, are £6 each. See moteparkfellowship.org.uk/theatre for details. The show lasts one hour 50 minutes.

The Simpsons inspires celebrated stand-up

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

MANY consider The Simpsons one of the greatest television shows of all time - elevating itself from simple animated show to cultural phenomenon.

And for one man, it has not only influenced his life, but inspired a comedy stage show which has won rave reviews from around the world.

Following critically acclaimed, total sell-out runs at Edinburgh, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth Comedy Festivals, Yianni Agisilaou will be embarking on a 22-plus date tour this autumn with his hit show The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know.

And on November 7, the show rolls into Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre.

Described as "a love letter to the world's greatest TV show", he shares stories, facts, impersonations and more in a look at a lifetime spent quoting, referencing and learning from the Simpsons and how he almost became the actual real life replacement voice for Mr Burns and Smithers.

Whether you're a Simpsons geek, an everyday fan, or a total Simpsons novice, it will be a night where you'll be bathed in the bright yellow world of the famous family.

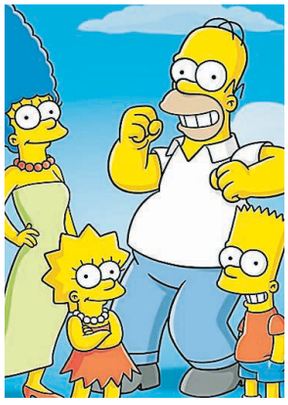
Yianni Agisilaou, an Australian comic, is in high demand as a headliner worldwide and a favourite at the Edinburgh and Melbourne Comedy Festivals, where he's won a host of awards, among them the Raw Comedy Best Act Award, Amused Moose Laughter Award and Three Weeks Editor's Award. He's been seen on Comedy Central's The World Stands Up and was recently the support act on Micky Flanagan's stadium-filling Out Out tour.

The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know by Yianni Agisilaou will be at the Marlowe Theatre on November 7.

■ **Tickets for the show are on sale now.**

■ **To book, visit the theatre's website at marlowetheatre.com or call the box office on 01227 787787.**

COMIC: Yianni Agiilaou above, and in Simponson form left



FAMILY: The Simpsons have long been a huge TV hit

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Lofty ambitions can open up value and space

Don't want to move but seeking more space? Then why not consider investing in a loft conversion?

WITH soaring house prices, more and more people are looking at alternatives to trading up and taking on ever bigger mortgages.

And one of the most frequently pondered options is expanding the size of your existing home by looking up into your loft space.

If you need more space at home, converting the loft into an extra room, or rooms, can make a lot of sense, both now and when you come to sell

But while they can transform your home and living space, there are plenty of aspects to be alert to. Here's our guide:

1. If your home's loft is more useful to you as living space than storage, converting it is the obvious thing to do. A loft conversion should make your home more valuable and sellable, and if you can fit a bathroom or shower room up there, as well as a bedroom and built-in storage, you have the perfect master or guest suite.

2. Loft conversions cost from around £20,000, but are often a lot more, depending on the size, spec and type of conversion. There are plenty of companies in Kent offering the service so make sure you get a handful of quotes and discuss exactly what it is you want with them.

The cheapest and easiest loft conversions are ones with only skylights, as the line of the roof is unchanged. However, this isn't ideal if the loft has limited space and head height.

OPTIONS: Get lots of quotes and be clear on what you want

3. Building out the roof to create more useable space inside will give you a much more satisfactory conversion. As long as there are no planning restrictions, building a full-width dormer window across the roof at the back and changing the side of the roof so it's 'straight' (viewed from the front or back) instead of sloping (this isn't possible with mid-terraced houses) will maximise the space internally.

4. For a loft to be suitable for conversion, the main space should be at least 2.3m high - generally, the steeper the pitch of the roof, the better it will be for conversion. Standing up in the loft and walking around (if safe to do so) will give you an idea of how much useable space there is.

If there isn't enough head height, even by building out the roof, you may be able to lower the ceilings in the rooms below, but this will be expensive and disruptive and isn't practical if they're already quite low. Another option may be to rebuild the roof to make it higher, which is also a big, expensive job.

5. You'll need space for a staircase up to the loft on the floor below and if this means losing a bedroom, you may not be much better off by converting the loft. Spiral staircases can be a good space-saving solution, as can narrow (and straight) 'space-saver' staircases, although they aren't necessarily practical for everyday use and are unlikely to comply with building regulations.

'Barry' back at panto

EASTENDERS and Extras star Shaun Williamson will be returning to the Marlowe pantomime this year.

Joining him in Peter Pan will be Coronation Street star Wendi Peters and CBeebies star Gemma Hunt.

They will star alongside regulars Ben Roddy as the pantomime dame, and Lloyd Hollett. Tickets for the festive shows are on sale now.

Surtees for Father's Day

HEVER Castle will be showcasing a special collection of themed cars in memory of racing legend John Surtees, who died earlier this year.

The two-day event on June 17-18 is supported by the Alfa Romeo Owners' Club and the Ferrari Owners' Club of Great Britain who will have cars on display on Saturday, followed by the Surtees' collection on Father's Day.

Carr drives in to Leas

TICKETS are still available for comedian Jimmy Carr as he brings his latest stand-up tour to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall in July.

The star and host of a shows such as 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown will be performing his The Best of, Ultimate, Gold, Greatest Hits tour on July 12.

Tickets cost £31.65 plus booking fees and are available now via the venue's website.

Big crowds at Turner

MORE than 9,000 people flocked to the Turner Contemporary at the end of last month for the opening weekend of its new exhibition, Every Day Is A New Day.

The Margate gallery features works by Phyllida Barlow, Michael Armitage and JMW Turner.

It follows a successful preview event on May 24 which saw the audience addressed by poet Lemn Sissay.

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By Air from Gatwick

21 September, 2017 • Quote: SC9-KOS

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INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad • Return flights with luggage to Venice - supp't may apply • 3 nights half-board stay at a 4-star hotel in Bled, Slovenia • 5 nights half board stay at a 4-star hotel in Poreč, Croatia • All excursions • Transfers abroad

Corinth Canal & Ancient Greece Small Ship Cruise

By Air from Gatwick

19 & 26 Oct; 2 & 9 Nov, 2017 • Quote: CA-KOS

9 DAYS HALF BOARD FROM £1799pp

Join us on this rare opportunity to cruise through the Corinth Canal and to discover incomparable ancient history on this fascinating, small ship, circumnavigation of the Greek Peloponnese, taking in ancient Epidaurus, Nafplion & Mycenae, Pylos & Nestor's Palace, Katakolon & Olympia, Delphi and The Corinth Canal. Also included is a 1-night stay at a central Athens hotel before the cruise. Your cruise ship is the 48-meter ms Galileo, which can accommodate up to 49 passengers in 25 cabins. Her spacious and well-appointed interiors were renovated in 2016. The cabins are elegantly decorated and have either twin or queen sized beds, bathroom with shower en suite and are fully air-conditioned.

INCLUDED: return flights to Athens with luggage from Edinburgh - supp't may apply • 1 night hotel B&B in Athens • 7-night cruise sharing a lower deck standard cabin with private facilities & air conditioning • full-board: 7 American buffet breakfasts, 6 lunches and 7 dinners, including a Greek evening and Captain's dinner, regular (filter) coffee, tea and still mineral water free all day • English speaking expert guest speaker & cruise escort • Transfers in Athens

Vietnam & Cambodia Rail & Sail Explorer

By Air

7 November, 2017 • Quote: VC11-KOS

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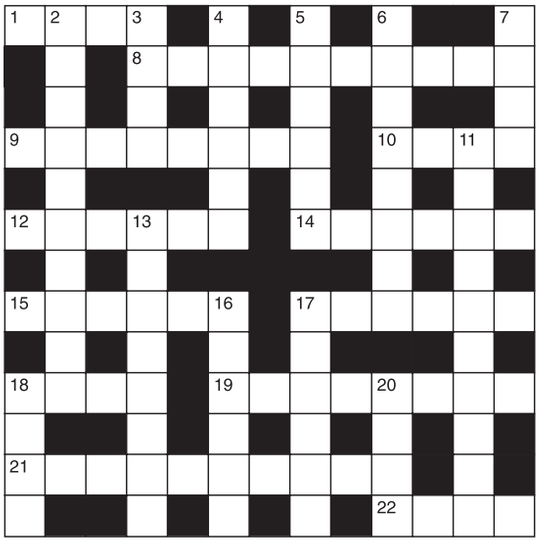
DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Catalogue (4)
8. Emphasise (10)
9. Dissemble (8)
10. Identical (4)
12. Diminish (6)
14. Rumpus (6)
15. Way (6)
17. Larder (6)
18. Equipment (4)
19. Bloodsucker (8)
21. Light (10)
22. Pit (4)

Down

2. Burn (10)
3. Taste (4)
4. Deed (6)
5. Except (6)
6. Interrogate (8)
7. Small valley (4)
11. Temperance (10)
13. Resonant (8)
16. Mend (6)
17. Gate (6)
18. Walk (4)
20. Stalk (4)

Cryptic

Across

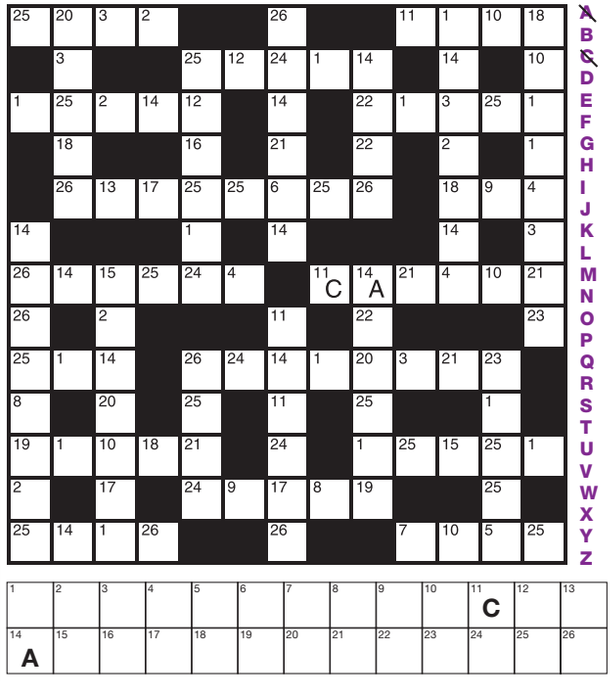
1. The French doctor who wrote essays (4)
8. Broadcasting, so to speak (2,3,5)
9. Where to get a drink when practising law? (2,3,3)
10. The place Vera needed to go to get the truth (4)
12. Boring beginning and end of the month, and the whole month (6)
14. Does it mean the rest of the week is dull? (6)
15. Really beat pudding mixture (6)
17. Stop being a nuisance during temporary sacking (3,3)
18. Listen to half a cry of approval (4)
19. Agree to make reductions? (8)
21. Another final move for the officer (6,4)
22. It throws light on 1's substitute tail (4)

Down

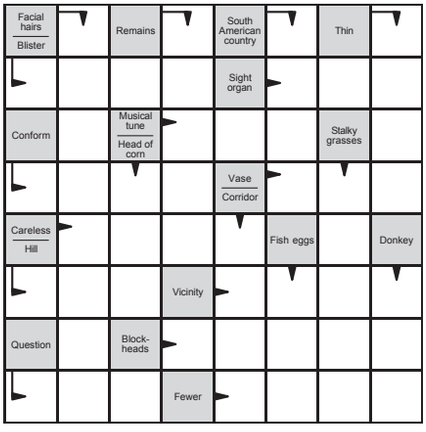
2. Nevertheless lacking variety (3,3,4)
3. The pair of them take trouble without hesitation (4)
4. Secure home for animal (6)
5. Brides cleared up the mess (6)
6. Fly on car used in hawking (8)
7. A quadruped turns up in this synopsis (4)
11. The preserve of drivers? (7,3)
13. Not disclosed - our litre is different (8)
16. Go back to surrender again (6)
17. Article in passenger ship of one dimension only (6)
18. He entertains a big crowd (4)
20. Film of dance? (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



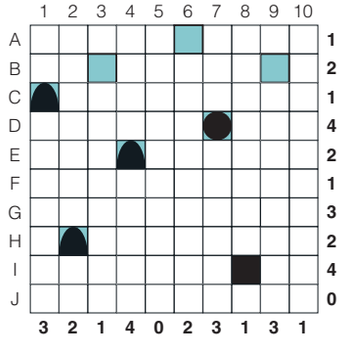
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

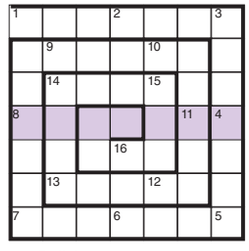
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Polish
2. Money reserve
3. Import tax
4. Abominable snowman
5. Religious image
6. Immediately following
7. Amphibian
8. Daybreak
9. Not any
10. Every
11. Sacred
12. Scream
13. Regard
14. Leg joint
15. Engrave
16. Brave man

Keyword clue: A girl's name

SUDOKU

Hard

	6	4		2		9	7	
			6		8			
7								1
	5						4	
4			7		3			6
	7						5	
9								7
			2		9			
	2	5		4		6	8	

Easy

9			4			8		3
8				2		4		1
		5				6		2
4		9		6	1		3	
	8	2				7		
	5		2	7		1	8	
2		4				9		7
7		6		4				8
		8		9	7		2	

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 1 Lamb; 8 On the radio; 9 At the bar; 10 City; 12 Jejune; 14 Sunday; 15 Batter; 17 Lay off; 18 Hear; 19 Contract; 21 Second mate; 22 Stable; 5 Debris; 6 Falconry; 7 Pony; 11 Traffic jam; 13 Ulterior; 16 Recede; 17 Linear; 18 Hoist; 20 Reel.

Quick
Across: 1 List; 8 Accentuate; 9 Disguise; 10 Same; 12 Lesson; 14 Shindy; 15 Manner; 17 Pantry; 18 Gear; 19 Parasite; 21 Illuminate; 22 Mine. Down: 2 Incinerate; 3 Tang; 4 Action; 5 Unless; 6 Question; 7 Dene; 11 Moderation; 13 Sonorous; 16 Repair; 17 Portal; 18 Gait; 20 Stem.

Codeword
1=R, 2=L, 3=I, 4=Y, 5=K, 6=Z, 7=J, 8=M, 9=H, 10=O, 11=C, 12=X, 13=O, 14=A, 15=F, 16=P, 17=U, 18=W, 19=B, 20=V, 21=N, 22=D, 23=G, 24=T, 25=E, 26=S

Word Spiral
1 Buff; 2 Fund; 3 Duty; 4 Yeti; 5 Icon; 6 Next; 7 Toad; 8 Dawn; 9 None; 10 Each; 11 Holy; 12 Yell; 13 Look; 14 Knee; 15 Etch; 16 Hero. **Keyword:** Dorothy

Sudoku - Easy

9	2	1	4	5	6	8	7	3
8	6	7	9	2	3	4	5	1
3	4	5	7	1	8	6	9	2
4	7	9	8	6	1	2	3	5
1	8	2	5	3	9	7	4	6
6	5	3	2	7	4	1	8	9
2	3	4	1	8	5	9	6	7
7	9	6	3	4	2	5	1	8
5	1	8	6	9	7	3	2	4

Sudoku - Hard

5	6	4	3	2	1	9	7	8
2	9	1	6	7	8	5	3	4
7	3	8	5	9	4	2	6	1
1	5	3	9	8	6	7	4	2
4	8	2	7	5	3	1	9	6
6	7	9	4	1	2	8	5	3
9	1	6	8	3	5	4	2	7
8	4	7	2	6	9	3	1	5
3	2	5	1	4	7	6	8	9

Bound for beach that became Baywatch

Baywatch may be on the big screen this time round, but those famous red cossies are as skimpy as ever. **LAURA IVILL** heads to the coast of Georgia to discover where the seaside caper was filmed

The sun setting on Tybee Island. Picture: PA /THINKSTOCKPHOTOS

SET on golden beaches and starring the likes of Pammy and the Hoff, Baywatch may have been pure cheese but it was also one of the most-watched TV shows ever, with a weekly audience of 1.1 billion in 148 countries.

Now, with our appetite for Nineties nostalgia in full swing, the lifeguards are back – this time in an action-comedy reboot for the big screen, with original favourites Pamela Anderson and David Hasselhoff in cameo roles. So when the call came to explore the movie's beach location, Tybee Island, I made sure I was first in line.

But Tybee Island's not in Malibu, or even Hawaii – it's in the state of Georgia, a scenic drive up the coast from Florida. It's Gone With The Wind territory: America's Deep South of cotton plantations, freshwater swamps, salt marshes, shrimping and alligators. Gnarly, centuries-old oak trees are draped in eerie shawls of Spanish moss, only 20 miles from where Forrest Gump sat on a bench in a leafy square, recounting his life story.

The seaside town is a mixture of charming old detached homes, with verandas and rocking chairs where locals sit out on the hot, humid summer nights. The area has a lived-in, seaside feel, much treasured by the descendants of those that have had homes here since the Twenties, and have seen the dirt tracks replaced by Tarmac only recently.

Wide-open beaches surround the island: ideal for picnics, beach games, jogging, water sports, jet-skiing, dolphin-watching and lazing in the sun. This semi-tropical coast has idyllic temperatures in spring and autumn, and the sea breezes take out some of the humid summer heat that hangs around a toasty 27-32C.

Tybee is an easy 18-mile drive from Georgia's second city, the historic trade port of Savannah. It's a gem, sometimes described as a "mini-Charleston" (the historic port city across the river in South Carolina), with its own picturesque, leafy and walkable downtown area.

When the town was founded in 1733, the first settlement was based on a grid system and formed 24 "pocket parks". Many years later, one of these even provided a backdrop for that famous scene in Forrest Gump.

All the facts

Laura Ivill was a guest of the tourist board. For information, see visittybee.com and VisitTheUSA.co.uk

America As You Like It (www.americaasyoulikeit.com; 020 8742 8299) has a 10-night holiday to Florida and Georgia from £1,519 pp (two sharing). Includes flights from Gatwick to Orlando, returning from Savannah to Heathrow, 10 days fully inclusive economy car hire (150 US dollars one-way fee payable locally), plus two nights at each of the following: Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, Seaside Amelia Inn, Jekyll Island Club, Hotel Tybee and B Historic Savannah Hotel.

feedback

your say...

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

CPS has a duty to uphold the law

CRAIG Mackinlay has no business criticising the Crown Prosecution Service for the timing of their decision to prosecute him with offences under the Represenation of the People Act 1983.

It is a matter for the CPS not politicians as to how they conduct their affairs. Their job is to uphold the law and if we value our democracy it is vital the laws that protect it are enforced.

In a democracy, the judiciary must be independent of political interference, a situation that from her injudicious remarks about the Craig Mackinlay case, Theresa May appears to be unhappy about.

It is not in her remit to question decisions made by the CPS or to say that the charges brought against Mackinlay are "unfounded".

It is the courts that decide whether or not charges are unfounded, not politicians, however high their office.

If there was skullduggery afoot regarding election expenses and the CPS belives that there was, then it is in the public interest the facts are given a hearing in a court of law.

Mr Mackinlay and his co-defendants will have their day in court and if found not guilty they will be exonerated. As the saying has it, justice must be seen to be done, never more so than when it concerns our electoral system - the very corner stone of democracy.

Robert Muir,
Westgate on Sea

Timing suggests an easy target

AS the former chairman of South Thanet Conservative Association and an electoral agent, I find the timing of the announcement regarding the charges relating to the expenditure of the local Conservative MP to be very suspicious.

For it to be announced less than a week before the general election must be questioned and though I am a devout believer in honour and honesty in politics and government, in a time of major security challenges and threats to our people's lives, and as a Mancunian and ex soldier, are some of the police looking for easy tasks rather than confronting the grave threats our nation faces?

Peter Booth,
via email

Not all ignored animal rights

THOUGH the general election will be over by the time this is published (and people have voted for more of the same) reader Vivien Clifford [KoS, letters, last week] should have read the Ukip manifesto before justifiably complaining about the lack of animal welfare omitted from other political parties manifestos.

She would have read, amongst other animal welfare commitments, to increase three fold, the maximum sentence of six months a magistrates court can give for animal cruelty, as well as making sure that all meat is clearly labelled, whether it was killed humanely or by the halal method, combined with a lot more checks on slaughter houses.

Do you know how the meat was slaughtered in meat products like pies or served in hospital meals or in school dinners?

Halal meat is a lot more widespread than you may think.

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

LETTER OF THE WEEK

We must keep on the pressure over health

PLEASE may I take this opportunity to thank all of you that supported Chek (Concern for Health in East Kent) by taking part in the march in support of the Kent & Canterbury Hospital last Saturday, and also for the immense help that you, the people of east Kent, gave to us in organising and preparing for the event.

I feel passionately that it is important and critical that the strength of feeling about our health services is there for all to see, and indeed believe, and it is evidenced from last time, that public opinion does make a difference.

You will all be aware that stroke services have been 'temporarily' moved and that more services will suffer the same fate from June 19.

We must all insist that these services are brought back at the earliest possible time, but more importantly campaign vigorously that the future of health services at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital must be that of a fully functional acute specialist hospital with all associated services.

The horrific happenings both in Manchester and London recently really does show not only the importance of the availability of local health care, but the importance of having enough fully trained health professionals available.

Chek has a full focus on what it as an organisation has in fighting for your health services, but what can you do?

The important thing is support us in future events the first being the public meeting on June 16 at the Canterbury Academy in Knight Avenue at 7pm. This will be your opportunity to question the chief executive of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, Matthew Kershaw. This is the replacement meeting for the one affected by purdah in the run up to the election.

Ken Rogers
Chair of Chek

Ponder sea level rises around us

YOU published an article recently about development within the Thames Estuary. Has anybody taken rising sea levels into consideration?

With levels rising and the possibility of a new Thames barrier to protect London, much of the area will flood and with more concrete, less water will go into the ground and will run into the Thames and make it rise even higher.

There are some projections that London, New York and other capitals will be under water by the end of the century. Some lateral thinking is required.

Jean Coulter,
via email

What a big turn around, Susan

LAST week's report of Susan Carey's [Conservative councillor on Kent County Council for Elham Valley] entirely specious Damascene conversion from lorry park supporter to qualified doubter caused me to ask the friend I was with when reading it to 'pass the sick bag'.

She will fit her newly uplifted cabinet role alongside KCC's Paul Carter very snugly and no doubt smugly as they share similar standards of probity and objectivity.

If the hat fits, then wear it Susan

David Plumstead,
Shepway Environment and Community Network

Vaping is key to giving up fags

THE major health authorities such as Cancer Research UK, the World Health Organisation and Public Health England all agree that vaping is at least 95 per cent safer than smoking.

Given this is the case, why isn't vaping being heavily promoted as a cessation device?

Pharmaceutical nicotine replacement therapies are being advertised extensively but the success rate is about six per cent,which dosn't seem very efficient.

I smoked for 60 years and stopped through vaping. I found it quite easy and painless.

David Turner,
Sevenoaks

You just can't be sure, can you?

I MAY be one of the few here, but I cannot remember a less engaging general election for many years than that which has just passed.

An inevitability about the result and feeble opposition has denied us a real debate.

I can only hope the parties have sorted themselves out for next time.

N Miles,
Maidstone

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Guildford Lawn Terrace in Ramsgate

by **Brian Summers from Faversham**

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LAUNCH: The edgy revamped model will be in showrooms from the end of July and is likely to prove a big hit once more

Seat hopes for place in the sun with its new Ibiza

THE edgy new Seat Ibiza is now on sale, priced from £13,130 on the road, loaded with the latest tech, outstanding dynamics and more cabin space and comfort.

The Spanish brand's most important model has all-new styling while preserving the same youthful, functional, sporty and comfortable spirit. The fresh design, reflecting Seat's latest distinctive character, sees an edgier, sportier look.

This fifth-generation Ibiza supermini, now offered only as a five-door hatchback, is a completely new model and the first to use Volkswagen Group's new MQB A0 modular platform which allows a huge advance in quality and highlights Seat's importance within the group.

The new Ibiza is roomier inside, more robust and safer thanks to being 87mm wider which gives it a more purposeful, ground-hugging profile and have an extra 95mm between the front and back wheels.

There are initially three 1.0-litre, three-cylinder petrol engines - 75PS naturally-aspirated and 95 and 115PS turbo versions – and a new 150PS, four-cylinder 1.5-litre turbo petrol arrives later this year.

Lower-powered engines get a five-speed manual transmission with the 115PS unit having six-speed manual or optional seven-speed DSG automatic.

The car's dynamic behaviour, ride quality and driving comfort also benefit from the new platform and 30 per cent stiffer, lighweight body. There have also been big improvements in noise control, vibrations and ride harshness.

Five trim levels start with S followed by SE and SE Technology and range-topping FR and XCellence. FR is aimed at those looking for a sportier car, while XCellence focuses on comfort, elegance and technology.

The new Ibiza is launched in showrooms on July 21.

KENT LIFE

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Evolution not revolution with the Golf

Andy Russell puts the latest generation of the ever-popular VW Golf throught its paces and discovers that once again the German brand has got it just about right

WHEN Volkswagen launches a new Golf, or gives this core model a mid-life makeover, it's a big deal.

With 33 million sales worldwide – two million in the UK - since 1974, and most changing hands several times used, a huge number of people have had some contact with the Golf whether as owner, driver or passenger.

Volkswagen has now updated the Golf hatchback and estate – let's call it Mark 7.5 – evolutionary, rather than dramatic. That's the Golf formula and why it's a UK top seller.

The revised Golf keeps those reassuringly good bits that work so well, adding up to be more than a sum of their parts, but gets a mild facelift, revised engines, new driver aids and more sophisticated infotainment systems - all in keeping with the Golf's big-car feel.

And it's more for less with the new Golf £650 less on average.

The virtual 12.3in active info display from the Passat and Tiguan is standard on top models, or a £495 option, with various views to prioritise what the driver needs such as instrument cluster or navigation map.

The highlight is a new 1.5-litre turbo petrol engine – 150PS with fuel-saving technology to shut down two cylinders when cruising and a 130PS Bluemotion version.

The other turbo engines - 85 and 110PS 1.0-litre, 125PS 1.4-litre and 230PS and 310PS 2.0-litre petrol and 115PS 1.6-litre and 150PS and 184PS 2.0-litre diesels - have been tweaked for more power or improved environment performance.

You soon realise what a well-balanced package the Golf is when it comes to ride and roadholding, regardless of model.

I think less is more with the big-selling SE Navigation with its smaller wheels and deeper tyres supremely comfortable on poor roads but its agility and grip inspires confidence through corners - firmly planted and forgiving.

You could take your grandmother out in the GTI and she wouldn't feel shaken about but the high-performance R is a hard ride but sticks to the road like glue.

Volkswagen has enhanced the big-car feel, quality and classless appeal of the Golf. It's still the car to beat in this sector but the task has just got tougher.

VW Golf 1.0 TSI SE 110PS hatch

Price:	from £ £17,625
Engine tested:	999cc, 110PS, three-cylinder, turbo petrol
Performance:	0-62mph 9.9 seconds; top speed 122mph
MPG:	58.9 combined
CO2 emissions:	109g/km
Warranty:	Three years or 60,000 miles
Will it fit in the garage?:	SE hatch L 4,258mm; W (excluding door mirrors) 1,799mm; H 1,492mm

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Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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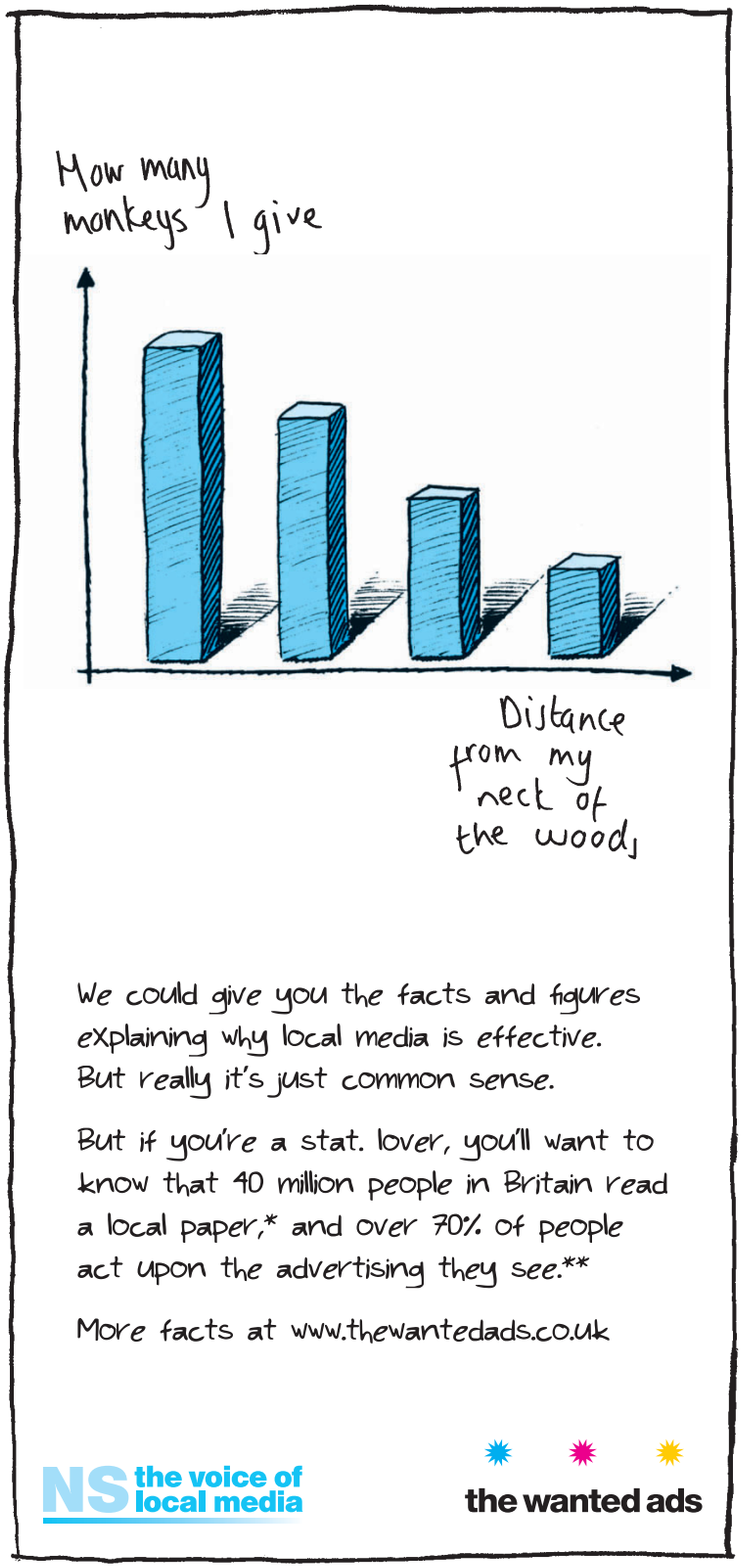

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*Source: GB TGI 2009 Q3 (April 2008 - March 2009)
**Source: The Wanted Ads STAGE 1. GFK NOP Base: all adults

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ARCHANT

In loving memory of our dearly beloved brother

Michael Jeffrey Johnson

of Hampton Crescent, Gravesend, Kent. Born 12th June 1959 sadly taken from us on Monday 29th May 2017 aged 57. We will miss him terribly he shall remain in our hearts forever. He was funny, loving, generous, loved animals, nature, fishing and singing.
Everything about him will always be in our memories.

A brother's love will always be
Within our hearts each one can see
His love for life will always show
It's hard to let our brother go
Within the heavens up above

There's room up there for more to love
The Angels sing and dance with grace
To welcome him to a better place
God bless and keep you safe from harm
And hold you in his loving arms

Love from your siblings Linda, Coral, Billy, Victor and brother in law to Gideon and George and uncle to Darren

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Richard John Wanstall, Geoffrey Wanstall, Douglas John Wanstall trading as J Wanstall and Sons of Bank Farm, Aldington, Ashford, Kent TN25 7DF is applying for a licence to use Bank Farm, Aldington, Ashford, Kent TN25 7DF as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicles and 2 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Mariana McCarthy trading as Reinstatement Services Ltd of 45 Hamsey Green Gardens, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9RS is applying for a licence to use Whites Transport, The Hanger, The Loop, Manston Kent CT12 5DE as an operating centre for 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

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The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff:

Physiotherapist – Margate and Ashford

Full Time 37.5 hrs per week Salary - £27,000 - £29,000
Interview Date – TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- BSc or Equivalent in Physiotherapy
- Member of CSP
- Current HCPC Registration
- Relevant post graduate experience
- Proven clinical experience in the delivery of orthopaedic and MSK physiotherapy

Staff Nurses X 3 – To cover our Ashford and potential growth to Canterbury

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Salary: £23-25,000 per annum dependant on qualifications and experience
Interview - TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

Theatre Practitioner - Margate

Full Time - 37.5 hours per week Salary - £21,000 – £25,000 per annum (dependant on experience) Interview – TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner
- NMC/HPC Registered
- Maths and English (GCSE or equivalent) Grade C or above.
- Ability to assess, plan and evaluate patient care
- Knowledge or research and evidence based practice
- Teaching and assessing/mentorship
- Catalyst for change

Anaesthetic Practitioner - Margate

Full Time - 37.5 hours per week - £21k – 25k per annum
Interview date - TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Operating Department Practitioner
- HPC Registered
- Knowledge of research and evidence-based practice
- eaching and assessing/mentorship, or willing to undertake
- Anaesthetics
- Knowledge of CQC
- HLS Teaching (Anaes)

Staff Nurse Out Patients – Margate

Part Time 30 hrs per week Salary - £26,121.29 (pro rata)
Interview Date – TBC

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Experience within the outpatients department and in a surgical/ medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Demonstrates patient focus
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to professional development

Health Care Assistant – Level 3

Part time – 30 hours per week Salary - £16,600 (pro rata)
Closing Date – 19 June 2017 Interview Date – 22 or 27 June 2017

Qualifications and Experience

- Evidence of Health Care experience
- GCSE English or equivalent
- Experience in the provision of patient care
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends

Staff Nurse (Ward Margate)

Part Time 30 hrs per week Salary - £13.75 per hour
Closing Date – 20th June 2017
Interview Date – 27th June and 4th July 2017

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- Committed to providing a quality clinical service

Housekeeper - Margate

Part Time – 30 hours per week Salary £7.54 per hour
Closing Date – 19 June 2017 Interview Date – 27th and 29th June 2017

Qualifications and Experience

- Previous housekeeping experience
- Previous experience in a customer facing role
- Mathematics and English (GCSE or Equivalent) Grade C or above
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Ability to recognise and report situations affecting patient care
- Flexible approach
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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Pakistan spinner Shah joins county

The 31-year-old is the world's top-ranked test leg-spinner

Cricket

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THE world's top-ranked test leg-spinner, Yasir Shah, has joined Kent for four county championship matches.

The Pakistan bowler was added to the county's ranks ahead of their clash against Durham this weekend, with Kent looking to continue their promotion push after a strong start to the season.

Shah is also available for the trips to Worcestershire and Nottinghamshire before taking on Northamptonshire at The County Ground, Beckenham on July 3-6.

The 31-year-old is the second fastest bowler of all-time to take 100 wickets in Test cricket, achieving the feat in just 17 matches and was top of the ICC Test bowler rankings last summer.

He is fine form, taking 46 wickets in two three-Test series for Pakistan against West Indies in 2016 and 2017, earning him both player of the series awards.

Shah said: "I'm very happy to return to England and play county cricket for the first time.

"I've heard positive things about the county and hope to contribute to the team.

"I've enjoyed my previous visits to England and look forward to playing in front of the Kent supporters at Canterbury and Beckenham."

Head coach Matt Walker added: "Yasir is one of the finest spinners in the world and will add something different to our attack.

"Taking 20 wickets consistently in red-ball cricket will be key to our promotion chances and a bowler of Yasir's calibre will help to us achieve that and rotate our attack at a key period in the season."

ADDITION: Yasir Shah

Pictures: ADY KERRY

Kent have enjoyed a strong start to their county championship campaign, remaining unbeaten in five matches since the start of the season.

Captain Sam Northeast insisted they needed more of the same to beat their visitors to Canterbury this week if they are to mount a genuine promotion bid.

"It looks really tight at the top of the table at the moment and we'll have to keep playing good cricket to keep winning, because we want to go up this year," he said.

Gillingham make third defensive signing

Football

GILLINGHAM have made their third signing of the summer with the addition of defender Gabriel Zakuani on a one-year deal.

The 31-year-old joins the Gills having failed to agree a new contract at Northampton Town, and boosts the club's defensive options with Alex Lacey and Luke O'Neill having already agreed terms at Priestfield.

Zakuani, a Congolese International, played under former Gills boss Justin Edinburgh last season at Sixfields, racking up 26 appearances in total and scoring two goals.

Boss Ady Pennock said: "I'm really pleased to get Gabriel on board. Naturally he was attracting interest from other clubs but I'm delighted he has committed his future to us for the forthcoming season.

BOSS: Ady Pennock

"Along with Alex and Luke he will provide stern competition for places in defence, and we very much look forward to working with him."

The defender began his career at Leyton Orient before joining Fulham for a million pounds in the summer of 2006.

Spells at Stoke, Peterborough and Kalloni in Greece followed prior to signing for the Cobblers last summer.

Zakuani told the club: "I'm delighted to have joined Gillingham; as soon as I met the manager and Peter Taylor I felt it was the right place to continue my career and I can't wait to get going.

"The management have made some great signings already and I'll do my best to help push the club up the League One table."

Zakuani featured in the African Cup of Nations earlier this year.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Jewiss gears up for big weekend in Yorkshire

KENT'S teenage sensation Kiern Jewiss heads to Yorkshire tied fourth in the Drivers' Standings and leading the Rookie Championship as Croft Circuit is set to play host to the fifth weekend of the Ginetta Junior Championship.

A double podium weekend at Oulton Park last time out saw Kiern, 14, continue his ascent up the Drivers' Standings in his debut season in the series – scoring points in seven of his nine races so far this year.

Despite entering the series late into the year, Kiern, from Harrietsham, and once dubbed "better than Lewis Hamilton", now holds a 48-point lead on his next competitor in the Rookie Standings and trails Championship leader, Tom Gamble, by a mere 61 points as we reach the halfway stage of the season.

Head of MB Partners Young Driver Academy, Kieren Clark, said: "Kiern has been getting stronger every weekend and reaching the halfway mark on the season, we are confident Kiern is in a place to score maximum points."

TALENT: Kiern Jewiss

HOME: Maidstone's Gallagher Stadium

Premier League giants to arrive in Maidstone

PREMIER League giants Crystal Palace will be in the county next month for a showpiece friendly with Maidstone United.

The National League side are marking five years at the Gallagher Stadium and will welcome the London side, who reached the FA Cup final in 2016, to the county town on Saturday, July 15.

The Eagles will be the highest profile team to visit the home of the Stones since Brighton & Hove Albion played the inaugural game back in 2012.

Club chief executive Bill Williams told the club's website: "It will be an absolute honour to welcome Crystal Palace to the Gallagher Stadium this summer and we're delighted that they will be part of our fifth anniversary celebrations."

Mills makes Ebbsfleet switch

EBBSFLEET United have made their first signing since being promoted to the top-tier of non-league football with the addition of former Whitehawk striker Danny Mills.

Fleet boss Daryl McMahon, who signed a bumper new five-year deal himself last week, swooped quickly with other clubs hot on Mills' heels to land the 6ft 4in forward after his five years in Sussex came to an end.

Mills, 26, joined the Hawks in 2012 from Carshalton Athletic and was top scorer at the club for three seasons running, regularly featuring amongst the National League South's top goalscorers, and bagging more than 100 goals in just over 200 games for the Hawks

Even in a struggling side last season, Mills made the league's team of the year for the second campaign in succession, with his aerial ability particularly impressing.

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